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# REFERENCE

## PREFACE

THE present translation is intended chiefly for English readers who desire to acquaint themselves with the contents of one of Dante's most characteristic works. It may also serve as a running commentary on the text for such students of the original as need help of this kind. With both these aims in view, the translator has endeavoured to adhere as closely to the original as English idiom permits.

The translator regrets that limits of space have prevented him from printing the Italian text side by side with the English version. But the single-volume edition of Dante's complete works, edited by Dr. E. Moore for the Clarendon Press, from which the translation is made, will be in the hands of almost all English-speaking students of Dante. The few changes in this text which the translator has ventured to suggest are mentioned in the notes. The notes refer only to some of the passages in which the translation needs special attention; but, as they embody some small contributions to the criticism of the text, they may be of interest to students. A short subject-index has also been appended. No general commentary has been attempted. Any one who wishes for a key to the allusions and references contained in the *Convivio* will do well to provide himself with Dr. Paget Toynbee's Dante Dictionary, which is indispensable for the student of this and of Dante's other writings.

The previous versions of the *Convivio* which the translator

has consulted are those of Kannegiesser in German, and of Miss Hillard and of Mr. Wicksteed in English. Kannegiesser's rendering deserves to rank high among translations both for its insight into the meaning and its success in conveying a general impression of the original. The taste and spirit of Miss Hillard's version, in spite of occasional inaccuracies, should always render it a favourite with English readers. Mr. Wicksteed's work was not published until the present translation, which was begun some years ago, was approaching completion. The translator has derived considerable help in the revision of his own rendering from that of so learned a scholar, to whom he desires to offer his most grateful acknowledgements.

The translator also desires to thank those friends who have encouraged him in the prosecution of his task, especially Dr. Paget Toynbee, who, amid his own labours, has found time to read a large part of the work in manuscript. But for his friendly assistance, this translation would be far more defective than it is. For the blemishes which remain, the translator is wholly responsible.

W. W. JACKSON.

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## CORRIGENDA

Page 37, l. 22, *for they read this*

60, l. 6, *for Things Good read Goods*

191, l. 11, *for paints read painteth*

272, l. 2, *for her read our*

## INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

SOME knowledge of the *Convivio* is indispensable for every one who desires to trace the development of Dante's genius, or to understand his relation to the thought and literature of his age. It fills the central space in his history, and is the link between the *Vita Nuova* and the *Divina Commedia*. In his great poem he looks at life and estimates its true meaning from above. He has reached the final stage, and understands the relation between things seen and unseen. His early love has been restored to him ; but she is now transformed into the object of his spiritual devotion, who has left her place in heaven to be his monitress and guide. In the *Convivio* he tells us how the thought of Beatrice has been superseded by an attachment of another kind, in which, through the satisfaction of his intellectual needs, he finds consolation for his loss. She has for a time passed out of his earthly life, but the temporary eclipse of the Beatrice of the *Vita Nuova* in the *Convivio* is the necessary prelude to the final ascendancy of the Beatrice of the *Commedia*. The foundation of the divine poem is laid in the study of philosophy.

Dante's treatment of his subject in the *Convivio* is not less characteristic of the middle period of his life than his main plan. We have to learn incidentally from his great poem, or to take for granted, what are the philosophical assumptions on which it proceeds. In the *Convivio* the intermediate stages in his mental development are fresh in

his memory. He wishes his readers to follow the same path : he admits them into his confidence, and tells them how he trained himself ; he gives an account of his intellectual progress, and states explicitly the principles on which his treatise was composed. The writer of the *Commedia* has acquired a mastery over his resources, and handles them with the ease and freedom of long familiarity. In the *Convivio* he is still a learner : we see him in his workshop, collecting his materials and putting them into shape. A simile or a conception, which is conveyed by a word or a phrase in the *Commedia*, is occasionally set forth with a fullness of detail that seems due chiefly to its novelty. His treatise was composed not merely for the instruction of his readers. The *Convivio*, no less than the *Vita Nuova* or the poems, was written *con amore*. He wishes to record his own mental growth, and to set out as fully as possible the conclusions at which he has arrived.

But the interest of the *Convivio* is due not merely to the light which it reflects on the poet's development. It marks an important step in the literary history of his native country. It was the most ambitious prose work which had hitherto been composed in the vernacular. But, although written in prose, it was based on the explanation of a series of lyrical poems, and follows the poetical conventions of his age. Above all, it is penetrated with the philosophic beliefs of an epoch in which philosophy and the theology allied with it enjoyed an unquestioned supremacy over the field of knowledge and intellectual activity.

In approaching the *Convivio* it is therefore desirable to start with some conception of its general purpose, and of the method of treatment adopted ; to form some estimate of its literary significance ; to know something of the point

of view from which contemporary lyrical poetry, including that of Dante himself, was regarded ; and, above all, to have some apprehension of the philosophical principles on which the whole of the existing fabric of knowledge was reared. A word must be said on each of these points in turn.

I. The *Convivio* was intended to be a comprehensive summary of the truths of Philosophy, or the highest knowledge, in their application to life. Philosophy was understood by Dante and his contemporaries to comprehend all intellectual pursuits, the Arts of the *Trivium* and *Quadrivium*, the Sciences, Physical, Moral, and Metaphysical, and highest of all Theology, to which all other kinds of knowledge were auxiliary or subservient. Two circumstances made it possible to bring all knowledge under one point of view ; the supremacy conceded to Aristotle, the ‘master of those who know’, and the teacher of that logical method to which all valid reasoning was required to conform ; and the acceptance of Aristotle’s philosophy by the Church, as the handmaid of Theology, and as supplying the mould in which theological doctrine should, as far as possible, be cast. In the age of Dante, Philosophy and Theology were more closely allied than at any other earlier or later epoch. Until the beginning of the thirteenth century, only the logical treatises of Aristotle had been current in Christian Europe. But at that date, chiefly through the agency of the scholars attached to the Court of Frederic II, himself *chierico e loico grande*, the Physical, Moral, and Metaphysical treatises of the great philosopher became known, not in the original Greek, but through the medium of Latin translations made from Arabic commentators. The Church at first, suspicious of the source from which they came, discountenanced their study ; but before the middle of the century the ban was

removed, and the alliance between Philosophy and Theology was concluded. This alliance gave to knowledge the unity necessary for those encyclopaedic summaries which were characteristic of the age. \* Among the great churchmen, Aquinas, no doubt, who is thrice cited by name in the *Convivio*, exercised the strongest influence over Dante in his later years. But in the *Convivio* he derived more of his material from Albertus Magnus, the teacher of Aquinas, who had commented on the whole of Aristotle's treatises, and was less profoundly theological than his great disciple. Among the writers to whom Dante would also have been indebted are Vincent of Beauvais, whose *Speculum* included a summary of Universal History as well as of all other knowledge, and Brunetto Latini, the author of the *Trésor*, of whom Dante makes loving mention in the *Inferno*. The design of the *Convivio* and of Brunetto's work is the same. Like the *Trésor*, the *Convivio* was a layman's book. It was intended to bring the highest teaching concerning the principles which regulate human conduct in public and private life, as well as a mass of knowledge about the constitution of human nature and of the world, within the reach of all who were fitted to receive it. The portion of the *Convivio* which was completed is a mere fragment. If the original design had been carried out, it would have comprised fifteen books, each except the first preceded by an allegorical poem, which would have been expanded and explained in a prose commentary. Only four books remain, but they are enough to exhibit the plan and method of the whole.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It may reasonably be conjectured that Dante's failure to complete the *Convivio* may have been due chiefly to causes of two kinds. However early the treatise was begun after the date when Dante became absorbed in philosophical studies, the portion of it which he finished must have been written during his exile. He tells us (*Conv.* I, c. iii) that he had then wandered over almost the whole of Italy exposed to all

The scholastic dress in which the thought of the *Convivio* is clothed is as alien to modern habits of mind as the general scheme of the work. Supreme importance was still attached to the syllogistic method of reasoning; nothing was to be approved unless it could be reduced to syllogistic form; everything, on whatever assumption it rested, was to be accepted, which could be expressed in the approved manner. The weakness of the foundations of knowledge was hidden by the strength of the building erected on them. The need of sifting testimony for matters of fact was not yet recognized. Hence Dante, like every other contemporary writer, is wholly uncritical. A passage of Scripture or of Virgil, a mystical interpretation of a story from Ovid or of a narrative of the Bible, even the agreement of the supposed fact with the hypothesis which it confirms, are deemed to supply equally valid evidence. It has been aptly remarked that at that period the written word, whoever the writer may be, was considered the infallibly true word. Not only was all reasoning reduced to the same type, but all subjects were handled in the same frigid and scholastic style. The same method of analysis, of division and subdivision, of objection and reply, was applied to scientific statement and to the creations of the fancy; poetry as well as prose might be tried by this standard. But even the prevailing fashion of

the hardships of poverty. The completion of his design under such circumstances would have been almost impossible, even if he had not had other work on hand. Internal evidence proves that he must have been engaged on the fragment that remains as late as 1308. By that time the *Commedia* was far advanced. In proceeding with the *Convivio* he would have been obliged to adhere to the hypothesis on which he had begun it, to have kept Philosophy in the foreground, and to have made no reference to Beatrice in the character ascribed to her in the *Commedia*. He may well have desisted from so ungrateful a task. It may reasonably be conjectured that some of the material which Dante had intended for the *Convivio* was incorporated in the *Commedia*.

treatment cannot conceal Dante's originality of mind, and in those passages of the *Convivio* which are disfigured by scholastic subtlety and conceit, there are still flashes of insight, and sentences in which the elevation of the thought is rivalled by the purity and grace of the expression.

II. Dante himself was conscious of the service which he had rendered to his native language by employing it in place of Latin for so important a work as the *Convivio*. In Italy as in other countries the rise of poetry preceded that of prose. Prose writing first came into use, as was natural, in commercial transactions, then in the composition of tales (*novelle*), and was only gradually extended to philosophical or theological treatises. For this tardy employment of the vernacular in Italy there were special causes. A literary dialect had to be created to take the place of Latin, which was the common property of educated persons. Latin also was more generally intelligible to the mass of readers on the classic soil of Italy than in other countries. Even books of so popular a character as the *Chronicle of Salimbene* (circa 1221-1290) were still written in Latin, which was adapted to popular taste by the infusion of idioms borrowed from the vulgar tongue. Brunetto Latini's great work was composed in French, which was a recognized literary language, in order to gain a wider audience; while his *Tesoretto*, a poem intended to popularize the *Trésor* for ordinary use, but left unfinished by its author, was written in the vernacular. There were indeed prose writings of serious import somewhat earlier than the *Convivio*. Guittone of Arezzo composed letters to public personages, and discourses in his native dialect, and Ristoro, also an Aretime, wrote a treatise on Astronomy in the dialect of Arezzo in the year 1282. There were also Italians, such as Giamboni, a Florentine

judge, who translated important works both from Latin and from French, including the *Trésor*, into Italian. Nevertheless, Dante's originality is plainly marked both by his choice of the vernacular as the vehicle of expression in the *Convivio*, and by his command over its resources. He clearly foresaw the future in store for the vernacular. 'This shall be a new light and a new sun, which shall rise when the old sun shall set, and shall shine on those who are in darkness and mist because of the old sun which gives no light to them' (*Conv.* I, c. xiii). In his recognition of the importance of his native tongue, Dante was far in advance of Petrarch the great humanist of the fourteenth century. Although he claims for the style of the *Convivio* a somewhat more elaborate elegance than we should be disposed to concede to it, yet on the whole it shows hardly any traces of immaturity. A few words occur in the text which have since passed out of use; expressions are occasionally employed which are more appropriate for poetry than prose; there is often a certain artlessness in the structure of a long sentence or paragraph, and the same word is frequently repeated several times over in the course of a few lines. But a style which, like that of the *Convivio*, always rises to the demands which are made on it and is everywhere simple and lucid, cannot properly be deemed archaic or obsolete.<sup>1</sup>

III. The use of allegory was the dominant characteristic of lyrical poetry in the age of Dante. The fondness for allegory which was common to all early literature received a great stimulus from Christianity. It served to establish links between Christian belief and pagan mythology, and

<sup>1</sup> Those who wish for a full account of the growth of Italian Literature in the thirteenth century should consult Gaspari's *History of Italian Literature to the Death of Dante* (Oelsner's Translation).



gave a practical value to many portions of Holy Scripture which would otherwise have been unedifying. Allegory in the ordinary sense of the word was in vogue both in sacred and in profane literature during the latter half of the thirteenth century. Abstractions and qualities were embodied and described as real personages, or the process was inverted, and real personages or events were taken to represent abstract qualities and were invested with moral and religious significance. In the *Convivio* (Book II, c. i) Dante gives a formal definition of the four senses, literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogical, in which 'Scriptures', i. e. all serious writings as well as Holy Scripture, may be taken. This division is similar to that adopted by Aquinas (*Summa Theol.*, *Pars Prima*, Qu. I, Art. x), who himself was indebted to earlier authorities. Dante, however, does not in practice accurately distinguish the three latter senses of allegory. He tells us in his Epistle to Can Grande that these mystic senses, though called by various names, may all in general be termed allegorical, thus following the example of Hugh of St. Victor, who as Aquinas informs us held a similar view.

But besides the various uses of allegory here defined there was a spirit pervading the poetry of Dante and his friends which was closely allied with allegory. It is perhaps more akin to what Dante calls the 'anagogic' use of language than any other, though he gives no special name to it. But it is part of the essence rather than an adjunct of contemporary lyrical poetry, a fashion of thought on which allegory is easily engrafted rather than a species of allegory. It is that poetical treatment of earthly love which raises it to a higher sphere, and transforms the love of the senses into a spiritual passion from which all earthly taint is removed. In the Provençal poetry of chivalry, from which the love-

poetry of Italy derived its origin, love of the lady whose charms were sung was deemed to confer and to enhance every knightly virtue and grace ; but Italian lyrical poetry in the latter half of the thirteenth century had made a further advance. Guido Guinicelli, a Bolognese, who, like many other poets and men of letters of that day, was a student of jurisprudence, was regarded by Dante as the author of this 'sweet new style' and his teacher :

. . . il padre  
Mio, e degli altri miei miglior, che mai  
Rime d'amore usar dolci e leggiadre.  
*Purg.* xxvi. 97-99.<sup>1</sup>

An echo of Guinicelli's famous Canzone, 'Al cor gentil ripara sempre amore,' may be found in many contemporary poems, e.g. in the Canzone prefixed to the Fourth Tractate of the *Convivio*. The sonnets and Canzoni of the *Vita Nuova* are suffused with the same spirit. The conception of love, defined in the *Convivio* (III. ii) as the spiritual union of the lover with the object of his love promoted this exaltation of mind, and justified expressions which might otherwise have been open to censure and misunderstanding. If the Canzone, 'Così nel mio parlar' (No. ix, p. 135, in Fraticelli's edition), which is commonly thought to be one of the Canzoni intended for insertion in the *Convivio*, was among those misinterpreted by Dante's critics, they were certainly not without some excuse for their error.

The exaltation of mind thus fostered by the conception of love naturally found expression in the allegorical application of the language of love-poetry to Philosophy. Guido Cavalcanti, Dante's dearest friend, whom he regards as

<sup>1</sup> 'A father to me, and to all the others my superiors who ever composed sweet and graceful love poetry' (Tozer's translation).

superior both to Guinicelli and himself, was specially famous for this use of allegory. Frigid as this kind of treatment may seem to us, it was redeemed from pedantry and conceit, in Dante's case at all events, by the intensity of human feeling, which was its primary inspiration. Dante was one who spoke because the fire burned within him, and only when it burned.

. . .                      Io mi son un che, quando  
 Amor mi spira, noto, ed a quel modo  
 Che ditta dentro, vo significando.

*Purg.* xxiv. 52-4.<sup>1</sup>

Most students of Dante will be inclined to agree with Dante Rossetti when he affirms that, 'the existence always of the actual events even where the allegorical superstructure has been raised by Dante himself' is the postulate which lies at the root of all true Dantesque commentary. We can apply this postulate without any hesitation to the interpretation of the *Convivio*. Dante himself tells us that the Canzoni had a literal meaning. This naturally implies that there were facts corresponding to his words taken in their literal sense. They become a beautiful fiction (*bella menzogna*), symbolic only when interpreted allegorically. Dante's definition of allegory implies a basis of fact. It is true that there were many lyrical poems of which love or philosophy or some abstract conception are the immediate subject. Such are the Canzone 'Donna mi prega' of Guido Cavalcanti, the Canzone prefixed to the Fourth Tractate of the *Convivio*, and many other contemporary poems. These stand on a different footing.\* But the whole structure of the *Convivio*, like that of the *Vita Nuova*, implies the

<sup>1</sup> 'I am one who, when Love inspires me, lend an ear, and express in words what he dictates in the form of thought.'

passion for a living being, which is a fact before it receives an allegorical interpretation. The *Convivio* affords an example of allegory in a sense in which the word cannot be applied to the poems of the *Vita Nuova*. Critics who deny real existence to the Beatrice of the *Vita Nuova* appear to confound two different modes of poetical treatment, which have just been discriminated, viz. the exaltation of love as a spiritual emotion raising the lover above the region of earth, and that use of allegory, properly so-called, which is defined by Dante in the *Convivio*. The Beatrice of the *Vita Nuova* is the subject of the former treatment. There is no valid reason for denying that this exalted passion was kindled by an earthly object. The evidence of Boccaccio and Benvenuto, and Dante's mention of various events in the life of Beatrice are all inconsistent with this supposition. Beatrice becomes an allegorical personage, properly so-called, for the first time in the *Commedia*. In the intermediate portion of his life his love for Philosophy has superseded his love for Beatrice. Though Beatrice still lives in heaven with the angels, and on earth with his soul, another mistress has dominion over him. But the lady to whom, on Dante's hypothesis, the Canzoni of the *Convivio* are addressed, though she becomes the personification of Philosophy, is not merely an allegorical figure. She is no less real than Beatrice. Dante describes her appearance to him, his growing attachment to her, the conflict between the old love and the new, and his final surrender to the latter in terms which would naturally be deemed to imply her existence in flesh and blood. If we had only the evidence supplied by the language of the *Convivio*, there might be some justification for regarding this lady as merely symbolical. But the *Vita Nuova* also speaks of this *donna gentile* or *pietosa*

in language which places her on the same level with Beatrice as a living person, and makes no reference to Philosophy. Dante refers to her dwelling, and to his first vision of her in the same way as to various circumstances in the story of his love for Beatrice, without any intimation that he is speaking figuratively; and in the *Convivio* itself (Tr. III. 15 end) he implies that his mistress in the literal sense was compassionate, and was disdainful only in the figurative sense, thus plainly indicating the reality of the former. It would be easy to accumulate evidence. These remarks, however, are not intended to discuss points of detail, but only to assist the reader in placing himself at the point of view from which the *Convivio* should be approached. The poet was inspired with an overmastering desire to link the present with the past and with the future, to blend all knowledge into one coherent system, and to bring the experiences of life into one harmonious whole. For this purpose allegory was an indispensable instrument. But the basis of the allegory was no mere fancy. His conception of allegory postulates the existence of facts, for allegory is the agency by which earthly passion is brought into relation with Philosophy and Theology, and becomes their servant and interpreter.

IV. The *Convivio* would be unintelligible without a general knowledge of the philosophic principles underlying that synthesis of reason and faith which had been effected by the great thinkers and teachers of the thirteenth century. In the Scholastic system of that age, Theology was the queen of the Sciences, but the concessions offered by Theology to reason in order to obtain this supremacy were at least as great as those offered by reason to Theology. Scholastic Theology was essentially rationalist. It has already been remarked that the substantial agreement which then prevailed

among all educated men on matters of religious and philosophical speculation was due to the ascendancy of Aristotle, although their beliefs were also deeply coloured by Platonism and mysticism. The current Scholasticism desired not only to reconcile reason with revelation, but all those philosophical principles which claimed to be reasonable with each other. As an eminent French writer has remarked, 'men supposed that above all the variations of the sects, and all the paradoxes of individuals, there existed among the Greeks a constitutional philosophy, if we may use the word, a body of doctrine invariable in its fundamental tenets, established on premises consecrated by long tradition; and all their labour was bestowed on the discovery of this body of doctrine, of this Philosophy.'<sup>1</sup> But without attempting to analyse the various ingredients which entered into the Scholastic Philosophy, we must endeavour to frame some conception of the main principles from which it was developed. Scholasticism was the culture of the Schools established or revived at the end of the eighth century, which controlled the intellectual life of Europe until its disintegration in the age of the Renaissance. The fragments of Greek Philosophy on which it was originally based were certain portions of the logical treatises of Aristotle with the *Timæus* of Plato, translated by Boethius and other writers, and set out in handbooks adapted for general use. Classical tradition also filtered down through various ecclesiastical writers, especially Augustine. This fragmentary teaching, which fell on minds eager for intellectual food, at once forced into prominence the question of the nature of Universals, which was the centre

<sup>1</sup> Hauréau, *Philosophie scolastique*, ii, p. 226. Compare *Conv.* IV, c. vii. 'Their doctrine' (that of the Peripatetics) 'may almost be called Catholic opinion.'

of philosophic interest for the next six centuries or more. Speculation on the nature of Being, and on the mental processes by which it was apprehended, thus became the staple of philosophic thought. In that age the conception of God was the only form under which absolute Being could be made the object of reasoning and speculation. God became, therefore, the highest term at once of Philosophy and of Theology. All kinds of knowledge found their union and reconciliation in Him.

The names of some of the greatest Schoolmen adorn the period before the thirteenth century when the whole of Aristotle's writings became known. The Scholastic Philosophy always retained the impress which it received from the circumstances of its origin, notwithstanding the enlargement of its contents. Theology continued to be the acknowledged queen of the Sciences, and the nature of the Deity the highest object of speculation. Increased knowledge of Aristotle only supplied fresh material for definition. God was identified with intellect in its purest essence. He was already conceived as the highest Being, so that Scholasticism, with the aid of faith and of classical tradition, had solved what has been deemed the ultimate problem of Philosophy, the identification of thought with being.

This conception of God as intellect, and of everything in heaven and earth as divine in proportion to its participation in the nature of God, underlies the whole system of Dante and his teachers. The activity of intellect is higher than mere possession. God, therefore, is pure act or actuality of thought, and as such stands outside the limitations of time. God as the actuality of thought is also the source of form, that is to say, of the essence of all things so far as that essence is conceivable by the mind, whether their subject matter is

material or mental. The highest heaven or Empyrean, with all the blessed souls which enjoy the vision of God, has its being in the thought of God. The angels, as Holy Writ tells us, are the noblest of creatures. They are less than divine because they are created beings, and are capable of falling. They are, however, the agency by which God moves the noblest of substances, viz. the heavens. The thought of angels constitutes the movement of the heavens, and the influence of the heavens under which men are born largely determines their disposition and natural endowments. In the treatment of the heavens in the *Convivio* and in the *Paradiso* respectively, and in the distribution of the angelic orders among them there are some differences of statement ; and in the former work the heavens are made to represent the Sciences, including the studies of the *Trivium* and *Quadrivium* by an allegorical interpretation of which no mention is found in the latter. But both the treatise and the poem enable us to understand the reason of the importance attached to astronomy. The heavenly bodies and their movements, which were the subject matter of astronomy, were the means by which the divine intellect, acting through the intelligences nearest to itself, was brought to bear on human life. Man himself, the creature who is 'a little lower than the angels', is noble in proportion to the ascendancy of his intellect over his material nature. In the *Convivio* Dante follows Aristotle closely in the definition and classification of moral virtues, and in his account of the will. Both these virtues, and the will, on which moral virtue chiefly depends, are controlled by the reason ; they belong essentially to the rational, and not to the irrational or emotional side of human nature. This subordination of the moral to the intellectual nature was the logical result



of the assumption on which the current Scholasticism was based. On the other hand, although Dante considers the will to be an intellectual faculty, the responsibility of man is the keystone of his moral system, and he is never tired of recurring to it. But he does not overlook the need of reconciling points of view which are not wholly consistent with each other. Like most advocates of free will he has ultimately to fall back on the authority of faith and the verdict of the inner consciousness for a solution.

Readers of Dante who begin with the *Commedia* and pass thence to the *Convivio*, may be inclined to think that between the earlier and the later work the poet's conception of the supreme good has undergone a change. It is true that in the *Commedia* Theology, both in its practical and in its speculative aspect, fills the canvas. Religion, not morality, is all-important. Sin is substituted for vice, and sin is a spiritual, not an intellectual defect. Christian modes of thought take the place of pagan; the love of God and of man is put foremost. But love has not been overlooked in the *Convivio*. With Dante, as with Aristotle, desire is an active principle. The *primum mobile* has the swiftest possible motion because of its intense desire to be united with the Empyrean, the fixed and motionless abode of the Deity and the blessed spirits. Dante does not follow the example of his teachers in discussing the nature of God at any length. But in God is highest love, as well as highest wisdom and highest actuality (*Conv.* III, c. xii). He defines the attributes of the three Persons of the Trinity respectively as power, wisdom, and love (*Conv.* III, c. vi). Of these the first two are specially the attributes of mind. But love is no less an essential part of the divine nature. In the *Commedia* love which moves the Sun and the other stars is also

moving the soul to union with the divine. But when love has done its work, the Vision of God is intellectual bliss. The central principle in the *Commedia* is the same as in all Dante's other writings. Contemplation is highest. The *De Monarchia* affirms this as strongly as the *Convivio*: 'Agibilia, factibilia omnia speculationi ancillantur tanquam optimo' (*De Mon.* I, c. iii). Of the two kinds of happiness defined by Aristotle, contemplative and active, the former is the one thing needful (*Conv.* IV, c. vii). The philosophy that imparts it is the 'most beautiful and noble daughter of the Emperor of the Universe' (*Conv.* IV, c. xvii). The *Commedia* is based on the same theory. Earthly and Heavenly Wisdom lead us through moral probation to the knowledge of God. At the end of his divine epic, as love reaches its consummation, Dante keeps the philosophical motive of the poem steadily before his hearers. This is stated with characteristic clearness and precision, as if he were specially desirous of guarding against misapprehension :

E dei saper che tutti hanno diletto,  
Quanto la sua veduta si profonda  
Nel vero in che si queta ogn' intelletto.  
Quinci si può veder come si fonda  
L'esser beato nell' atto che vede,  
Non in quel ch' ama, che poscia seconda ;  
E del vedere è misura mercede,  
Che grazia partorisce e buona voglia ;  
Così di grado in grado si procede.

*Par.* xxviii. 106-114.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'And be it known to thee that the joy which they all feel is in proportion to the depth of their insight into the Truth, wherein every spirit finds repose. Hence it is clear that the state of beatitude consists in the act of seeing, not in that of loving, which is subsequent ; and the power of sight is determined by merit which arises from grace and goodwill ; such are the steps of the development.'

And in the last canto of his great poem he makes his confession of faith in the modified realism of the School of Aquinas, which holds the independent existence of Universals, but places the form of all that is permanent in nature, together with the form of all that is variable, not in the human reason, but in the divine.

Nel suo profondo vidi che s'interna,  
 Legato con amore in un volume,  
 Ciò che per l'universo si squaderna;  
 Sustanzia ed accidenti e lor costume,  
 Quasi conflati insieme per tal modo,  
 Che ciò ch' io dico è un semplice lume.  
 La forma universal di questo nodo  
 Credo ch' io vidi, perchè più di largo,  
 Dicendo questo, mi sento ch' io godo.

Par. xxxiii. 85-93.<sup>1</sup>

This is the conclusion of the whole. The Vision of God is intellectual. Love still survives in the sense in which it is defined in the *Convivio*, as the spiritual union and conjunction of the subject with the object of love; but this union is intellectual.

In the attempt which has been made, however inadequately, to place the reader at the point of view from which the *Convivio* should be regarded, attention has necessarily been directed only to those modes of thought which have most deeply influenced its composition. Nothing has been said of Dante's political views which there find expression, or of his references to contemporary literature and history, or of

<sup>1</sup> 'I saw how within its depths is stored, bound together in one volume by the force of love, all that throughout the universe forms separate leaves—substance and accident, and their mode of operation, combined together, as it seemed, in such wise that what I speak of is one simple light. The essence which pervades this combination I believe myself to have seen, because while I say this I am conscious of an access of joy.'

his opinions on particular points of philosophical and scientific theory. His writings contain a wealth of allusion to current belief and practice which furnishes an inexhaustible supply of problems to excite the curiosity of the student. Dante is ranked by Shelley with Homer as 'the second poet, the series of whose creations bore a defined and intelligible relation to the knowledge and sentiment and religion of the age in which he lived, and of the ages which followed it; developing itself in correspondence with their development.' The poet's function was discharged most fully in the *Divina Commedia*. But the words of Shelley not inaptly describe the aim which Dante also set before himself in the *Convivio*. The most original minds, while they contain the germs of future developments, have the keenest insight into the life of their own generation, and are its most faithful exponents. Dante regarded all human interests as a whole. Imagination and fact, politics and religion, science and theology, could be blended and combined in one great system, because at the summit of the whole was God. At the end of the thirteenth century, before internal forces began to dissolve the fabric of its philosophical creed, there was a brief period when so high soaring a genius as that of Dante could accommodate itself without difficulty to the intellectual beliefs of the day. Dante could find room within the dominant philosophic system because that system was eclectic and all-embracing. In a more comprehensive sense even than Milton, who under many aspects most nearly resembles him, Dante may be called the child of his age.



# FIRST TRACTATE

## SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

(I) THE task which Dante sets before himself in the *Convivio* is undertaken in order to gratify that universal desire for knowledge of which Aristotle speaks in the beginning of the *Metaphysics*. But defect either of body or of soul, or external circumstances may prevent men from acquiring the highest knowledge. Some of these defects are blameable, others pardonable. Happy indeed are those who sit at the table where the bread of angels is eaten. Dante himself sits not at table, but gathers up the fragments which fall at the feet of those who sit there. Moved with pity for his kind, he reserves a part of his store, both bread and meat, to make a feast for them. To this he invites all whose defects are pardonable. The meat will be served in fourteen Canzoni, the bread will be served in the comment which will give first the literal, and then the allegorical interpretation of the Canzoni. (II) As the bread served at a banquet is cleansed from stain by the servants, so must the commentary be freed from objection. Two objections may be urged, viz. that the poet has to speak of himself, and that the fashion of his speech is hard to understand. Teachers of rhetoric forbid a man to speak of himself. There are good reasons for this prohibition. Nevertheless necessity may excuse a man for speaking of himself. He may speak sometimes in order to defend himself, sometimes in order to edify others. Dante will explain his Canzoni because they have been deemed to show that he is governed by passion, and not by virtue. He also would give pleasure and teach others how to write, and how to understand those who write allegory. (III) Moreover, the Commentary which is designed to explain the difficulties of the Canzoni may

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itself be accused of difficulty. The Commentary has, indeed, been purposely made somewhat difficult, in order to counteract certain disadvantages under which the writer labours. He has been exiled from his beloved Florence, and has wandered in poverty over Italy, thus becoming known and despised everywhere. Report magnifies and personal knowledge diminishes a man's good and evil qualities. Good report is magnified as it passes from one to another ; so too evil report. (IV) On the other hand a man's presence diminishes the esteem of his qualities for three reasons ; the puerility of men who, like children, judge by the outside ; their enviousness which shuts their eye to the truth ; and the natural human imperfection of the person judged. Hence a prophet is without honour in his own country. As Dante's presence has become familiar to his countrymen he wishes to counteract the effect of this familiarity by adopting a somewhat lofty style. (V) Accidental flaws have been removed from the Commentary, but one is ingrained in it, viz. that it is written in Italian not in Latin. The vernacular has been chosen for three main reasons, viz. to avoid unseemly disorder, for the sake of whole-hearted liberality, and from natural affection for the mother tongue. As to the first main reason : things are ordered most suitably when the qualities of the agent are adapted to attain the end. The qualities of a good servant are subjection, intimate acquaintance with his master, and obedience. Latin is devoid of all these qualities. Firstly, it is shown to be not subject, but by nature sovereign. (VI) Secondly, Latin has not the intimate acquaintance with Italian which is needed for a commentary on the Canzoni, and it has a general but not a particular knowledge of Italian, nor does it know the friends of Italian, such as Provençal. (VII) Thirdly, Latin could not be obedient. Perfect obedience should be pleasant, it should be not self-chosen, but wholly commanded, and it should be duly measured. Latin could not render obedience of this kind. (VIII) The second main reason for choosing Italian is the whole-hearted liberality which it displays. Whole-hearted

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liberality must give to many; its gifts must be useful; and it must give without being asked. All these characteristics are explained, and proved to be essential. (IX) The liberality of Latin would not have been whole-hearted, for it would not have satisfied any one of the three conditions just stated. It would not have served many, for it would not have been understood, since nobody now learns Latin except for gain. It would not have been useful, for few would have used it. It would not have given itself unasked, for every one demands that commentaries should be in Latin. (X) The third main reason for employing the vernacular is the natural affection which a man feels for his native tongue. Natural affection prompts men to magnify its object, to be jealous for it, and to defend it. In all these different ways Dante displays his love for the vernacular. He magnifies it by displaying it in act, not merely in potentiality. He is jealous for it, and therefore wishes to write his comment in the vernacular himself, lest if he should write in Latin some bungler might hereafter translate his comment into Italian. He desires to defend his native tongue, the language of *sì*, against those who prefer the language of *oco*, and to exhibit it in its native beauty. This is best displayed in prose, as a woman's beauty is seen best when unadorned. He would also expose the wickedness of those who disparage it by disclosing their evil intent. (XI) Five detestable causes move men to disparage their native tongue,—lack of discernment, deceit in excusing themselves, love of vainglory, the suggestions of envy, and faint-heartedness. As to the first; discernment is the eye of the mind. Those who lack discernment are like blind men: they have no guide but popular opinion: and are like sheep following their leader to their own destruction. As to the second: the bad artist blames his tools, or his materials, but not himself. So those who are not skilled in the use of Italian blame their native tongue and exalt another language such as Provençal. As to the third: vainglory impels men to seek praise for mastering a language other than their own. As to the fourth: those who cannot



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use Italian envy those who can, and therefore decry it. As to the fifth : a faint-hearted man always thinks too meanly of himself and his own affairs, and therefore contemns his native tongue. (XII) It is incontestable that Dante is filled with perfect love for his native tongue. Affection (as both Aristotle and Cicero testify) is inspired by propinquity and goodness, and increased by benefits conferred, and by common aims and intercourse. Propinquity implies close union. A man's native tongue is nearest to him, because it is fixed in his mind singly and alone before all others. Moreover, it displays the characteristic excellence of language, because it enables a man best to express the meaning he has in his mind. (XIII) The conditions which increase love are also present. If existence is the greatest boon, then a man's native tongue is to be loved because it gave him existence by bringing his parents together. It has also led him into the way of knowledge by enabling him to learn Latin. The vernacular, moreover, if it could have a conscious aim, would desire to preserve itself by assuming the most durable shape, i. e. the poetic. It has been Dante's aim to give it this shape. All his life long he has also had the most familiar intercourse with his native tongue. For the reasons enumerated he may claim to have purged the vernacular comment from all stain ; so that he can now serve up his meats with this oaten bread which may be eaten by thousands, and fill many baskets with the fragments that are left.

# FIRST TRACTATE

The figures in the headlines refer to the division of chapters and lines in the Oxford text. The letter <sup>n</sup> inserted in the text refers to the notes at the end of the translation.

I. As the Philosopher says at the beginning of the *First Philosophy*, 'all men naturally desire to have knowledge.' The reason of this may be that everything, being impelled by foresight belonging to its own nature, tends to seek its own perfection. Wherefore inasmuch as knowledge is the final perfection of our soul in which our final happiness consists, all men are naturally subject to the desire for it. Many however are deprived of this noblest perfection through various causes which, operating within or without the man, place the possession of knowledge beyond his reach.

Within the man there may be two defects and hindrances, the one appertaining to the body, the other to the soul. That appertaining to the body arises when its parts are not properly ordered, so that it is receptive of nothing, as is the case with the deaf and dumb, and the like ; that appertaining to the soul arises when wickedness prevails over her so that she becomes a follower of vicious delights, wherein she gives way to such deception that on account of these she holds cheap everything else.\*

Outside the man in the same way two causes may be apprehended, one of which subjects him to necessity, the other to sloth. The first is the care of the family and of the state, which properly draws to itself the greater part of mankind, so that they cannot afford leisure for contemplation.

The second is the fault of the place where a person is born and brought up, which sometimes will be not only devoid of every kind of study, but remote from studious people.

The two first of these causes, that is, the first that proceeds from within and the first that proceeds from without the man, are not to be blamed but are to be excused, and deserve indulgence ; both the other two, although one of them more than the other, deserve to be blamed and abhorred. Plainly therefore may any one who ponders carefully see that there is but a small remnant who can attain to the state desired by all, and that those who are hindered, and live always famishing for want of this food intended for all, are almost innumerable. Oh happy are those few who sit at that table where the bread of angels is eaten, and wretched are those who share the food of cattle. But since a man is naturally a friend of every man, and every friend grieves for the defect of him whom he loves, they who are fed at so lofty a table are not without pity for those whom they see go about eating grass and acorns on the pasture of beasts. And since pity is the mother of kind deeds, they who have knowledge always bestow liberally of their boon riches on those who are veritably poor ; and are as it were a living fountain by the water of which the natural thirst mentioned above is slaked. I who am not seated at the table of the blest, but am fled from the pasture of the common herd, and at the feet of those who sit at that table am gathering up of that which falls from them, perceive how wretched is the life of those whom I have left behind by the sweetness which I taste in that which little by little I gather up. Moved by pity, therefore, and not forgetful of my own state, I have reserved for these poor wretches something which I have already long time since displayed before their eyes, and thereby have filled them

with all the greater desire. Wherefore now wishing to make ready for them, I intend to prepare for all men a banquet of that which I have shown to them, and of the bread necessary for the meat thus set on table, without which it could not be eaten by them at this banquet; of that bread, I say, worthy of this meat, which without it I know to be served up in vain.

Therefore I do not wish that any one should sit at table with any of his organs in bad order, because he has not teeth or tongue or palate, nor any one addicted to vice, because his stomach is full of poisonous and contrary humours, so that it could not retain my meat. But let every one come hither who through domestic or public anxiety cannot appease the hunger that men feel, and let him sit at one table with all others who are likewise hindered. And at their feet let all those place themselves who are in this plight through slothfulness, because they are not worthy of any higher seat; and let the former and the latter take my meat together with the bread, for I will make them both taste and digest it. The meats of this banquet will be arranged in fourteen courses, that is, fourteen Canzoni, whereof both love and virtue are the subject-matter. These lacking the bread here presented had some shadow of obscurity, so that many were pleased with their beauty rather than with their goodness: but this bread, that is the present explanation, will be the light by which every hue of their meaning becomes visible. And if in the present work, which is called the *Banquet* as I wish it to be, the subject is treated in a more manly style than in the *New Life*, I do not intend therefore in any way to disparage that earlier treatise, but rather to help it on by this later, seeing that it is reasonable and meet for the former to be passionate and fervid, and for

the latter to be manly and temperate. For it is meet both to speak and to act differently at different ages ; because certain customs are fit and praiseworthy at one age which are unbecoming and blamable at another, as will be shown below by appropriate reasons in the fourth Tractate of this book. And in the former work I spoke when I was entering on my youth, and in the latter when it had already gone by. And inasmuch as my real intention was different from that which it seems to be in the Canzoni above mentioned, I intend to explain these by means of allegorical interpretation after the literal narrative has been discussed. So that both the one and the other discourse will impart a flavour to the feast for those who are invited to this supper ; and I pray all of them that if the banquet be not so splendid as beseems its profession, they will impute every fault not to my will but to my want of power, because my will here aims at perfect and precious liberality.

II. In the beginning of every well-ordered banquet the servants are accustomed to take the bread set on, and to cleanse it from every stain. Therefore I who in the present book play the part of these, intend first of all to cleanse this explanation, which passes for bread in my provision, from two stains. The first is that it does not seem allowable for any one to speak about himself, the other is that in giving an explanation it seems unreasonable to speak too profoundly. And in this manner the knife of my judgement purges away what is not allowable and reasonable.

The teachers of Rhetoric do not allow any one to speak of himself except on ground of necessity. And this is forbidden to a man because, when any one is spoken of, the speaker must needs either praise or blame him of whom he speaks ;

both of which kinds of discourse would be awkward for a man to employ when speaking of himself with his own lips. And in order to remove a doubt which here arises, I say that it is worse for a man to blame than to praise himself, although he ought to do neither the one nor the other. The reason is that everything which is intrinsically blameable is more uncomely than that which is so accidentally.

To dispraise oneself is intrinsically blameable, because a man ought to tell a friend of his defects secretly, and no one is a closer friend to any one than a man is to himself ; wherefore he ought to reprove himself in the chamber of his own thoughts, and there to weep over his faults, and not openly. Moreover, a man is not generally blamed for being unable, or for not knowing how to conduct himself well ; but for not willing to do so he is always blamed, because badness and goodness are judged by the will or the want of will. And therefore whoever blames himself, proves that he is aware of his own faults, and so proves that he lacks goodness. Wherefore speaking of oneself with blame is in itself to be avoided.

Self-praise is to be avoided as being evil incidentally, inasmuch as it cannot be bestowed without turning that praise into blame rather than praise. It is praise on the surface of the words, and blame in the eyes of any one who examines them in their core ; for words are used to make plain that which is not known. Wherefore whoever praises himself shows that he believes himself not to be esteemed good. And this is not the case with him unless he has a bad conscience, which he betrays in praising himself, and by betraying blames himself.

Moreover, self-praise and self-blame are to be avoided for the same reason and as much as bearing false witness,

since there is no man who can apply a true and just measure to himself, so deeply does self-love deceive us. Whence it happens that every one has in his own judgement the measures of a cheating merchant, who sells by one and buys by another. Every one tries his own misdeeds by a full measure and his good deeds by a short one, so that the number and size and weight of the latter appear to him greater than if they had been tested by a just measure, and those of his evil deeds appear to be less. Wherefore when a man speaks of himself with praise or the contrary, he either speaks falsely with regard to the matter in question, or he speaks falsely with regard to his own opinion of it; for whichever way he speaks it is a falsehood. And, therefore, inasmuch as consent is equivalent to a confession, he who praises or blames any one to his face commits an offence, for he on whom this estimate is passed cannot assent or dissent without incurring the guilt of praising or blaming himself; though the way of deserved correction must be here excepted, for this cannot be adopted without reproving the fault which it is intended to correct; and the way of deserved praise must be excepted, which cannot be trodden without making mention of virtuous deeds and of honours virtuously acquired.

However, to return to our main contention, I affirm, as has been intimated above, that a man may be allowed to speak of himself for necessary reasons. And among necessary reasons there are two specially conspicuous. One may be urged when without discoursing about oneself great disgrace and danger cannot be avoided, for in such a case Reason must admit that choosing the less evil of two paths is almost the same as choosing a good one. This necessity moved Boethius to speak of himself in order that,

under the pretext of finding consolation, he might palliate the lasting disgrace of his exile by showing that it was unjust, since no one else came forward as his apologist. The other necessity arises when from speaking about oneself great advantage to others follows in the way of teaching. This reason moved Augustine to speak of himself in his *Confessions*, because by the progress of his life, which was from bad to good and from good to better and from better to best, he gave us example and teaching which could not be received on any testimony so sure as this.

Wherefore, if both these reasons may be my excuse, the bread made from my meal is sufficiently cleansed from its first stain. Fear of reproach moves me, and the desire of giving a lesson which no other in truth can give. I fear the reproach of having yielded to such a passion as any one who reads the Canzoni above mentioned must think to have mastered me. This reproach is entirely dispelled by what I now speak about myself, for such speech shows that virtue not passion has been the moving cause. I also aim at explaining the true meaning of these Canzoni, which cannot be seen by any one if I do not tell it, because it is hidden under the figure of allegory. And they will not only give worthy pleasure to hear, but subtle instruction both in this method of speaking, and in this method of understanding the writings of others.

III. That thing deserves strong condemnation which is intended to remove some fault, but itself produces it, as a man would, who should be sent to settle a quarrel, and before he settled the first quarrel, should stir up another. And since my bread is cleansed on one side, it is meet that I should cleanse it on the other, if it is to escape that censure ; for



my writing, or commentary as it might perhaps be called, is intended to remove the defect of the Canzoni above mentioned, and may, perhaps, itself be somewhat difficult in certain parts. This difficulty is here intentional in order to avoid a more serious defect, and is not due to ignorance. Alas ! would that it had pleased the Disposer of the Universe that the cause for my apology had never existed ; for then neither would others have sinned against me, nor should I unjustly have suffered punishment, the punishment, I mean, of exile and of poverty. After it was the pleasure of the citizens of that fairest and most famous daughter of Rome, Florence, to cast me out of her dearest bosom (wherein I was born and brought up to the summit of my life, and wherein with their good leave I desire with all my heart to rest my weary mind, and to end my allotted span), I have wandered through almost every region to which this tongue of ours extends, a stranger, almost a beggar, exposing to view against my will the stroke of fortune which is often wont unjustly to be charged to the account of the stricken. Truly I have been a ship without sail and without rudder, wafted to divers havens and inlets and shores, by the parching wind which woful poverty exhales. And I have seemed vile in the eyes of many, who crediting some report, perhaps had pictured me under another form ; in whose eyes not only was my person held cheap, but every work of mine became of less esteem, both that which was already done, and that which was still to do. On the reason why this happens, not only in my case but in the case of all, it is my pleasure now briefly to touch ; saying, firstly, how a man's repute is magnified beyond the truth, and, secondly, how his presence brings it down below the truth.

The good report of a man is generated in the first place

by the favourable process<sup>n</sup> in a friend's mind, and by this it is first brought to the birth: for the mind of an enemy, although it receives the germ, does not quicken it. The mind which first brings it forth, both in order to embellish its own gift, and through affection for the friend who receives it, does not keep within the bounds of truth but oversteps them. And when the mind in order to embellish what it affirms oversteps the bounds of truth, it speaks against conscience; when affection misleads it to overstep them, it does not speak against conscience. The second mind which receives what is said is not content merely with the exaggeration due to the first, but is careful to embellish its own repetition of it, as being in this case the effect proper to itself; and so, by this action and by the deception which the affection generated in it practises on it, makes the report greater than it was when received, whether in agreement or in disagreement with conscience, as with the first mind. The third mind that receives it does the like, and so the fourth, and thus the report is enlarged to infinity. So when the action of the causes above mentioned is reversed, the reason of ill fame which is magnified in like manner may also be perceived. Wherefore Virgil says in the fourth book of the *Aeneid* that 'Fame thrives on motion and acquires greatness by going onward'. Any one who wishes can therefore see clearly that the image which is generated by fame alone, is always greater, of whatever kind it be, than the thing itself of which it is the image in its true condition.

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IV. Now that we have shown the reason why fame enlarges good and evil beyond their true dimensions, it remains in this chapter to exhibit the reasons which enable

us to perceive why a man's presence on the contrary, diminishes them; and when we have exhibited these we shall easily come to our main subject, I mean to the excuse above mentioned. I say then that there are three causes why a man's presence makes his person of less worth than it really is. The first of these is childishness—I am speaking with regard not to age but to intellect—the second is envy; these two reside in him who judges—the third is human imperfection; and this resides in him who is judged.

On the first we may briefly discourse as follows. The greater part of mankind live in conformity with sense not with reason, after the manner of children; and such as these have no knowledge of things except merely of their outside, and the goodness of them which is adapted for its proper end they do not perceive, because they keep shut the eyes of reason, which penetrate to the discernment of such an end. Hence they quickly perceive all that lies within their range, and judge according to their vision. And because they form some opinion with regard to the fame of others on hearsay, wherewith, when a man is present, the faulty judgement which decides not in conformity with reason but only in conformity with sense does not accord, they take that which they formerly heard for a lie, and rate low the person formerly rated high. Hence with these, who are as it were almost every one, a man's presence diminishes both his good and his bad qualities. Such as these are quickly enamoured and quickly surfeited, they are often cheerful and often dejected, with short-lived delight or sadness; they are soon made friends and soon enemies, they do everything like children without using their reason.

The second cause may be perceived by reasoning thus. In vicious minds equality causes envy and envy causes

false judgement, because it does not allow reason to plead on behalf of the thing that is envied, and the faculty of judgement is then like a judge who hears only one side. Hence when such as these see a famous person they are incontinently smitten with envy, because they see limbs and powers like their own, and they are afraid lest on account of the excellence of such a person they themselves may be less esteemed. And not only do they judge ill under the influence of passion, but by defaming they cause others to judge ill. Wherefore, in the estimation of these, a man's presence diminishes the good and evil in every one thus brought before them : I say the evil because many, taking pleasure in doing ill, are envious of evil-doers.

The third cause is human imperfection, which is found on the side of him who is judged, and is not operative without some familiarity and intercourse with him. To make this imperfection plain we must recognize that a man is disfigured in many ways, and as Augustine says, ' no one is without stain.' Sometimes a man is disfigured by some passion which occasionally he cannot resist ; sometimes by some deformed member ; sometimes by some stroke of fortune ; sometimes by the infamy of parents or of some one of his nearest kin. Fame does not carry these disfigurements with itself, but a man's presence does, and reveals them through intercourse with him ; and these stains cast a certain shadow on the brightness of his goodness so as to make it appear less resplendent and vigorous. This is the reason why every prophet is less honoured in his own country ; this is the reason why a good man should vouchsafe his presence to few, and his intimacy to still fewer, in order that his name may be approved and not lightly esteemed. This third cause may have the same effect on a man's evil as on his

good qualities, if the circumstances under which it operates are all reversed. Thus it is plainly perceived that through human imperfection, from which no man is free, the presence of every man reduces what is good or evil in him below what the truth wills it to be.

Therefore because, as has been said above, I have presented myself before almost all the men of Italy, on which account I am perhaps held cheaper than the truth warrants, being thus presented not only to all those whom my fame had already reached but also to all others, whereby all that concerns me has doubtless like myself been made light of, it is meet that with the help of a loftier style I should impart to the present work something of gravity, by which it may seem of greater authority. And let this be a sufficient excuse for the difficulty of my commentary.

V. Now that this bread of mine has been cleansed from accidental stains, it remains for me to excuse it for one that is ingrained in its substance, that is for being written in the vulgar and not in the Latin tongue, or to speak metaphorically, for being made of rye and not of wheat. And in excuse for this, three causes may briefly be pleaded which move me to choose this mode of expression rather than the other. The first arises from precaution against unseemly disorder, the other from whole-heartedness of liberality, the third from natural affection for one's native language. And of these causes and their sources, in order that I may acquit myself of any censure that may be passed on me for the reason above mentioned, I intend to discourse in order as follows. •

That which most adorns and commends human undertakings and most directly conducts them to a good issue,

is the possession of those dispositions which are ordained for the end in view, as, for example, boldness of mind and strength of body are ordained for chivalry as their end. And thus he who is ordained for the service of others ought to have those dispositions which are adapted to this end, such as submissiveness, intimacy, and obedience, lacking which every one is ill adapted to serve well. For if he is not submissive under all conditions, his service is always attended with labour and heaviness, and he rarely perseveres in it; and if he is not obedient, he never serves except in his own fashion and at his own pleasure, which is the service of a friend rather than of a servant. Therefore, in order to avoid this disorder, it is meet that this commentary which is made to play the part of a servant to the Canzoni inserted below, should always order itself so as to be subject; and it ought to be intimately acquainted with the needs of its lord and obedient to him. But these dispositions would all be lacking if it had been in Latin and not in the vulgar tongue, since the Canzoni are in the latter.

For in the first place, if it had been in Latin, it would not have been subject but sovereign, both on account of its nobility, and on account of its goodness and of its beauty. On account of its nobility, because Latin is stable and not subject to decay, while the vulgar tongue is unfixed and is subject to decay. Thus in the comedies and tragedies anciently written in Latin, which cannot undergo any change, we see that same language which we now possess: but this is not the case with the vulgar tongue which is arbitrarily moulded and transformed. Hence in the cities of Italy, if we will look attentively back over some fifty years, we see that many words have become extinct and have come into existence and been altered: wherefore, if a short time so

changes the language, a longer time changes it much more. Thus I say that if those who have departed from this life a thousand years ago were to return to their cities, they would believe that these had been occupied by some foreign people, because the language current there would be at variance with their own. This will be much more fully discussed elsewhere in a book which I intend to compose, God permitting, on the *Eloquence of the Vulgar Tongue*.

Moreover, Latin is not subject but sovereign on account of its goodness. Everything is good of its kind which effects that for which it is ordained, and the better it does this the more of goodness it has. Hence we say that a man is good who lives the life of contemplation or action for which he is by nature ordained: we apply the term 'good' to a horse which runs vigorously and far, for which thing he is ordained: we call a sword good which cuts hard things well, for which it is ordained. Thus speech which is ordained to make manifest the thoughts of men is good when it does this, and that kind of speech which does this most successfully is best. Wherefore, inasmuch as Latin makes manifest many things conceived in the mind which the vulgar tongue cannot (as those know who have command of both kinds of speech), the goodness of the former language is greater than that of the latter.

Furthermore, it is not subject but sovereign on account of its beauty. Men say that a thing is beautiful when its parts correspond as they ought, because pleasure results from their harmony. Hence a man appears beautiful when his limbs correspond to one another as they ought; and we say that a song is beautiful when its words correspond to one another according to the requirements of art. Therefore that language is the most beautiful in which the parts correspond

most perfectly as they should do, and they do so in Latin more than in the vulgar tongue, because custom regulates the latter, art the former; wherefore it is granted that Latin is the more beautiful, the more excellent, and the more noble. Wherefore the main contention which I have in view is established, namely, that a Latin commentary would not be subject to the Canzoni, but would be sovereign.

VI. Since it has been shown how the present commentary would not, if it had been in Latin, have been subject to the Canzoni written in the vulgar tongue, it remains to show how it would not have been intimate with, or obedient to them; afterwards we shall draw the conclusion that if unseemly disorders were to cease, it was necessary to speak in the vulgar tongue. I say that Latin could not, as a servant, have been intimate with its master, the vulgar tongue, for the following reason:

Intimacy in a servant is required chiefly for a perfect understanding of two things. One is the nature of his master, whereby some masters are of so asinine a nature that they order the contrary of what they wish, while there are others who wish to be served and understood without saying anything, and others who do not wish that a servant should set about doing what is necessary unless they order it. And why there should be these differences in men, I do not intend at present to explain, for this would make the digression much too long, except so far as I say generally that such men are almost like beasts, to whom reason profits little. Whence if any servant does not understand the nature of his master, it is plain that he cannot serve him perfectly. The other point is that it is meet for a servant to know the friends of his master, for otherwise he could not honour or



serve them, and so could not perfectly serve his own master, inasmuch as friends are, as it were, parts of a single whole ; for to will and not to will the same constitutes them a single whole.

Nor would a Latin commentary have had the intimacy with these things which is possessed by this same vulgar tongue. That Latin has not such intimacy with the vulgar tongue and its friends is proved as follows. He who knows anything in a general way, does not know it perfectly, just as any one who from a distance recognizes an object as an animal does not know it perfectly, because he does not know whether it is a dog, or a wolf, or a goat. Latin knows the vulgar tongue in a general way, but not individually ; for if it had had individual knowledge of it, it would have had the same knowledge of all the vulgar tongues, because there is no reason why it should know one of them rather than another. And thus whoever had had complete mastery of Latin would have possessed an individual knowledge of the vulgar tongue. But this is not the case, for any one who is a master of Latin, if he be an Italian, has no individual knowledge of the vulgar tongue of Germany, nor does a German have such a knowledge of the vulgar tongue of Italy or Provence. Whence it is plain that Latin has no intimacy with the vulgar tongue. Moreover it has no such intimacy with its friends, for it is impossible for any one to be intimate with a man's friends unless he is intimate with the man himself, wherefore if Latin is not intimate with the vulgar tongue, it is impossible, as has been proved above, for it to be intimate with the friends of that tongue. Moreover, without converse and familiarity, it is impossible to be intimate with a man ; and the men of any language with whom Latin has converse are much fewer than those with

whom the vulgar tongue of that language has converse, for all of them are its friends, and consequently Latin cannot be intimate with the friends of the vulgar tongue. And it is no contradiction to say that Latin indeed converses with certain friends of the vulgar tongue, but is not therefore familiar with all, and thus is not perfectly acquainted with the friends of the vulgar tongue, since perfect and not defective intimacy is required.

VII. Since it has been proved that a Latin commentary would not, as a servant, be intimate with its master, I will explain why it would not have been obedient to him. He is obedient who has a good disposition which is called obedience. True obedience ought to exhibit three qualities without which it cannot exist : it should be sweet not bitter, it should be wholly prescribed, and not self-chosen, it should be within measure and not unmeasured. These three qualities a Latin commentary would not possess, and therefore could not possibly have been obedient. That it would have been impossible for Latin to be obedient, is made clear by the following reasoning.

Everything that proceeds in inverted order is laboured, and therefore is not sweet but bitter, as, for example, to sleep by day and to keep awake by night, or to walk backwards and not forwards. When a subject commands his sovereign the order is inverted, because the regular order is for the sovereign to command the subject ; and thus the former commandment is not sweet but bitter. And because it is impossible to find sweetness in obeying a bitter commandment, it is impossible that when a subject commands the obedience of the sovereign should be sweet. Therefore if Latin, as has been shown above by many reasons, is sovereign

over the vulgar tongue, and if the Canzoni which play the part of commanders are in the vulgar tongue, it is impossible that its relation to them should be sweet.

Moreover obedience is wholly prescribed and is in no respect freely chosen, when he who acts through obedience would not have acted without such command of his own wish whether wholly or in part. Therefore if I should be commanded to wear two gowns, when I should have worn one without being commanded, I say that my obedience is not wholly due to a command, but is partly spontaneous. Such would have been the obedience of a Latin commentary, and consequently it would not have been obedience entirely due to a command. That it would have been such is plain for this reason, that Latin without being commanded by this its lord would have expounded many parts of his meaning (and it does expound them, if any one carefully examines writings composed in Latin), while the vulgar tongue in no respect does so.

Again, obedience is within measure, and is not unmeasured when it reaches the limit of the command, and does not overstep it; just as a particular nature is obedient to the universal when it gives thirty-two teeth to a man, neither more nor less, and when it gives five fingers to the hand, neither more nor less; and a man is obedient to justice when he inflicts what the law commands, neither more nor less.<sup>n</sup> And Latin would not have done this, but would have erred not on one side only whether of defect or of excess, but on both sides; and thus its obedience would not have been measured but unmeasured, and consequently it would not have been obedient. That Latin would have fallen short of fulfilling the commandment of its lord, and that it would also have exceeded it may easily be shown.

This lord, that is to say, these Canzoni to which this commentary is ordained to be a servant, command and desire that they shall be expounded to all those to whom their meaning may be so brought home that when they speak they shall be understood. And no one doubts that if they had issued command by word of mouth, their command would have been of this kind. But Latin would not have expounded them except to the lettered, for no others would have understood it. Therefore, inasmuch as those who desire to understand are much oftener unlettered than lettered, it follows that it would not have fulfilled the command laid upon it so well as the vulgar tongue, which is understood by lettered and unlettered alike. Latin, moreover, would have expounded their meaning to people of other languages, as to the Germans and the English and the like, and in this would have overstepped their command. For, speaking broadly, I say that it would have been contrary to their wish for their meaning to be expounded in quarters to which their beauty could not be conveyed as well. And therefore let every one know that nothing which is harmoniously compacted by the bond of the Muse can be translated from its own language to another without destroying its sweetness and harmony. And this is the reason why Homer has not been translated from Greek into Latin like the other writings which the Greeks have bequeathed to us; and this is the reason why the verses of the Psalter have none of the sweetness and music of harmony, for they were translated from Hebrew into Greek and from Greek into Latin, and in the first translation all that sweetness disappeared. Thus we arrive at the conclusion which was promised at the beginning of the chapter immediately preceding this.

VIII. Since it has been shown by sufficient reasons that if unseemly disorders are to be stayed, a commentary in the vulgar tongue and not in Latin is required for unfolding and explaining the Canzoni mentioned above, I now intend to show besides why whole-hearted liberality made me choose the former and reject the latter. Now whole-hearted liberality may be distinguished by three qualities which accompany the vulgar tongue and would not have accompanied Latin. The first is that it gives to many; the second is that it gives things useful; the third is that it bestows its gift without being asked for it. For to give presents and help to a single individual is good, but to give presents and help to many is a whole-hearted gift, in so far as it takes its semblance from the bounty of God who is the most universal benefactor. And, moreover, to give to many is impossible without giving to a single individual, inasmuch as the many include the one, but it is quite possible to give to a single individual without giving to many. Therefore whoever helps many confers both benefits, whoever helps an individual confers only one benefit; and hence we see that the framers of laws, in drawing them up, keep their eyes chiefly fixed on the most universal benefits.

Moreover to give things that are not useful to the receiver is indeed good, in so far as he who gives shows at least that he is a friend, but it is not perfect good, and therefore is not whole-hearted, as, for example, if a knight were to give a shield to a physician, or if a physician were to give a knight a copy of the *Aphorisms* of Hippocrates or of the *Art* of Galen. Wherefore wise men say that the face of a gift should have a resemblance to that of the receiver, that is to say, that it should be suitable and useful for him; and in the case of such a gift, the liberality of

him who thus discriminates in bestowing it is called whole-hearted.

But since statements about morals are wont to kindle a desire to ascertain their foundation, I intend in this chapter briefly to point out four reasons why a gift, in order to exhibit whole-hearted liberality, must be useful to the receiver.

In the first place, virtue whenever it operates should be cheerful and not sad. Therefore, if the gift is not cheerful both in the giving and in the receiving, there is in it neither perfect nor whole-hearted virtue. This cheerfulness cannot be conferred by anything but the advantage which abides with the giver on account of his giving, and which accrues to the receiver on account of his receiving. The giver, therefore, must have forethought to act so that on his side there remains the advantage of integrity which surpasses every other advantage; and to act so that the advantage of using the thing given passes to the receiver; and thus both the giver and receiver will be cheerful, and consequently the liberality will be more whole-hearted.

In the second place, virtue ought always to change things for the better. Thus, as it would be a blameable act to turn a fine sword into a spade, or to make a fine cup out of a beautiful lute, so it is blameable to move a thing from a place where it is of use, and to transport it to a place where it is less useful. And since it is blameable to work for no end, it is not only blameable to put a thing into a place where it is less useful, but even into a place where it is equally useful. Wherefore, in order that any change in things should be praiseworthy, it must always be a change for the better, because such change ought to be as praiseworthy as possible, and a gift cannot satisfy this condition unless it becomes

more precious by being passed on, nor can it be more precious in coming to the receiver, if he cannot make use of it with more advantage than the giver. Wherefore it follows that a gift must be useful to him who receives it, if it is to exhibit whole-hearted liberality.

In the third place, the exercise of virtue ought in itself to be the means of acquiring friends, inasmuch as our life has need of friends, and the end of virtue is the contentment of our life. Whence in order that a gift may make the receiver friendly, it must be useful to him, because its utility stamps the image of the gift on his memory, and this stamp is the stay of friendship; and the higher the utility, the stronger will be the impression. Hence Martin is wont to say 'never will the gift which John bestowed on me, fade from my mind'. Wherefore in order that the gift may exhibit its proper virtue, that is, liberality, and in order that this virtue may be whole-hearted, the gift must be useful to the receiver.

Lastly, virtue ought to act freely and not under compulsion. An act is free when any person goes voluntarily in any direction, as is shown by his keeping his face turned in that direction; an act is compulsory when a man goes against his will, as is shown by his not looking in the direction in which he is going. A gift looks in that direction when it is adapted to the need of the receiver. And because it cannot be thus adapted unless it be useful, if the virtue is to be attended with freedom of action, the gift must move freely in the direction in which it goes in company with the receiver; and the advantage of the receiver must be consequent on the gift in order that whole-hearted liberality may be there.

The third quality by which whole-hearted liberality may be distinguished is that it gives without being asked, because

giving after being asked is in one respect not virtue, but bargaining, since the receiver in such a case buys, although the giver does not sell ; wherefore Seneca says that ' nothing is bought so dear as that which is purchased by entreaty '. Therefore in order that there may be whole-hearted liberality in a gift, and that this may be visible in it, it must needs be free from anything like bargaining ; and therefore it is meet that a gift should be unasked. Why a gift that is bought by prayer costs so dear, I do not intend to discuss at present, because this will be sufficiently discussed in the last *Tractate* of this book.

IX. All the three above-mentioned conditions which ought to be combined if a benefit is to exhibit a whole-hearted liberality, were absent from the Latin commentary and present in the Italian. This may be plainly stated as follows : Latin would not have been of service to many, for if we recall to memory what has been remarked above, scholars outside the pale of the Italian language could not have availed themselves of its services. And as to those who speak Italian, if we will duly consider who they are, we shall find that only one out of a thousand would have availed himself of it rationally, since they would not have accepted it, so prone are they to love of gain, and thus devoid of all nobleness of mind, which is most of all required for this food. And I say to their reproach that they ought not to be called men of letters, since they do not acquire a knowledge of letters for their proper use, but only so far as they may employ it to gain money or rank ; just as no one should be called a lute-player who keeps a lute at home in order to lend it on hire, and not to use it for playing on it. If, therefore, we return to our main contention, I say that it may be clearly seen



why Latin would have conferred its benefits on few, while the vulgar tongue will be of true service to many. For the goodness of mind, upon which this service waits, is found in those who, on account of the wickedness of the world in forsaking the study of letters, have abandoned it to the men who have turned it from a lady mistress into a harlot ; and those noble persons are princes, barons, knights, and many other noble folk, not only men but women, numbers of both sexes who use the vulgar tongue and are not scholars.

Moreover Latin would not have bestowed a useful gift as will the vulgar tongue, since nothing is useful except so far as it is used, and as its goodness is not merely potential. For potentiality is not perfect being ; just as gold and pearls and other precious things are useless so long as they are buried in the ground ; since those which are in the hand of a miser are in a lower place than the ground in which treasure is hidden. The true gift bestowed by this commentary is the meaning of the Canzoni for which it is composed ; for it is intended most of all to lead men to knowledge and virtue, as may be seen in the course of the discussion concerning them. Of this meaning no one can make use but those in whom true nobility is implanted in the manner which will be described in the fourth Tractate ; and these are almost all men of the vulgar tongue, just as are those noble men and women of whom mention has been made above in this chapter. And this is not inconsistent with the fact that one or two scholars may be found among them, for as my master Aristotle says in the first book of the *Ethics*, ‘one swallow does not make spring.’ It is therefore plain that the vulgar tongue will bestow a useful gift which Latin would not.

Again, this tongue will bestow a gift unasked, which

Latin would not have done, since it will make a present of itself to be a commentary without ever having been asked by any one ; and this cannot be said of Latin, which has already been asked for as a commentary and gloss on many writings, as may be seen on the face of many commentaries at the beginning of them. And thus it is plain that whole-hearted liberality moved me to choose the vulgar tongue rather than Latin.

X. Weighty should be the excuse for serving up bread of rye and not of wheat at a banquet so noble in its viands and so honourable in its guests ; and there should be obvious reason why a man should deviate from what every one else has practised for a long time past, as, for instance, the use of Latin for a commentary. And therefore the reason of the change must be clearly shown, for the end of innovations is not certain, because we are here entirely without the experience which enables us to reckon on things to which we are accustomed and have held, both in their progress and in their end. Wherefore the Law was moved to command that men should pay diligent heed in entering on a new path, saying that ‘in setting up new things, the reason should be plain which leads us to deviate from that which has long been in use’. Let no one therefore wonder if the digression I have made in excusing myself be lengthy, but let him endure its length patiently because it is unavoidable. And in pursuing this digression further (since it is manifest that I betook myself to the vulgar tongue for my commentary and forsook Latin, both in order to stay unseemly disorders and through whole-hearted liberality), I say that the plan of my whole apology requires me to show how I was moved to this course through natural affection for my own native

speech ; and this is the third and last reason that impelled me to it. I say that natural affection chiefly moves a lover to three things, firstly, to magnify the object loved ; secondly, to be jealous for it ; thirdly, to defend it, as every one may see constantly happen. These three things made me choose this, namely, our vulgar tongue which naturally as well as for incidental reasons, I love and have loved.

I was moved in the first place by the wish to magnify it. And that by this means I magnify it may be seen by the following consideration. Although things may be magnified, that is made great, by many conditions of greatness, nothing makes them so great as the greatness of their own peculiar excellence, which is the mother and preserver of all other kinds of greatness. Wherefore a man cannot have any greatness higher than that of virtuous action for this is his own proper excellence, by means of which the greatness of true dignities and true honours, true power, true riches, true friends, true and bright renown, is both acquired and preserved. And this greatness I confer on this friend, in so far as what he has in himself of greatness potentially and in secret I cause him to possess actually and openly in his own proper activity, which consists in making manifest the meaning conceived.

I was moved in the second place by jealousy for it. Jealousy for a friend makes a man anxious to provide for the distant future. Thinking, therefore, that some unlettered person, to gratify the desire of understanding these Canzoni might have the Latin commentary translated into the vulgar tongue, and fearing that this translation might be composed by some one who like the translator of the Latin version of the *Ethics*, would make it seem uncouth, I took the precaution of composing it, trusting to myself more than to any one else.

Furthermore, I was moved by the wish to defend it against its numerous accusers who disparage it, and praise the other popular languages, especially the vulgar tongue of Oc, saying that it is more beautiful and better than the former, herein departing from the truth. For by the help of this commentary, the great excellence of the vulgar tongue of Si will be seen, because not only are the loftiest and newest conceptions almost as suitably, adequately, and gracefully expressed by it as by Latin itself, but its virtues cannot be fully displayed in rimed compositions on account of the incidental adornments which are linked with them; I mean rime and rhythm, and ordered numbers; just as with the beauty of a lady, when the decoration of her ornaments and apparel attracts more admiration for her than her person itself. Therefore, if any one wishes to form a right judgment of a lady, let him behold her when she has no beauty about her except her own, and is divested of all adventitious adornment, just as this commentary will be, in which the pliancy of its syllables, the propriety of its relations, and the pleasant speeches which are composed in it may all be seen; and when any one carefully regards these he will perceive them to be full of the sweetest and loveliest beauty. But since the exposure of an accuser's design is the most effective means of exhibiting his defects and wickedness, I will confound those who accuse the speech of Italy by stating the reason why they are moved to do this, and on this topic I will now write a special chapter in order that their shame may be the more conspicuous.

XI. To the perpetual shame and disgrace of these wicked men of Italy, who praise the vulgar tongue of other nations and disparage their own, I say that they are impelled to do this

by five detestable causes. The first is blindness of discernment; the second, knavish excusing of themselves; the third, greed of vainglory; the fourth, an objection prompted by envy; the fifth and last, cowardice of mind, that is pusillanimity. And each one of these faults has so numerous a following that those free from them are few.

Of the first faction we may discourse as follows. Just as the sensitive part of the soul has its eyes by which it learns the difference between things so far as they have external colour, so the rational part has its eyes by which it apprehends the difference between things in respect to the ends for which they are ordained, and this faculty is discernment. And just as he whose bodily eye is blind always follows the rest of mankind in judging between good and ill, so he who is blind to the light of discernment always in his judgement follows the popular cry, whether right or wrong. Therefore whenever the guide is blind, it must needs be that both he and the blind man also who leans upon him should come to a bad end. Therefore it is written that 'if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch'. This popular cry has for long past been raised against our vulgar tongue for the reasons which will be discussed below. In consequence of this cry, the blind described above, who are almost innumerable, with their hands on the shoulders of these liars, have fallen into the ditch of false opinion, and know not how to get out of it. The common people most of all are bereft of the habitual use of this light of discernment, because being absorbed from the beginning of their life in some calling, they concentrate their mind on this by constraint of necessity, so that they attend to nothing else; and since the habit of virtue, moral as well as intellectual, cannot be suddenly acquired, and they put

all their practice into some craft, and care not to discern aught else, it is impossible for them to have discernment. Thus it happens that many times they cry 'long life' to their death and 'death' to their life, provided some one begins. And this is the most dangerous fault incident to their blindness. Hence Boethius deems popular glory to be vain, because he sees that it is without discernment. These should be called sheep not men, for if a single sheep were to cast itself down a bank a thousand yards high, the others would go after it; and if a single sheep for any reason in crossing a road make a leap, all the others do the same even though they see nothing to leap for. And before now I have seen many of them jump into a well, because of one who jumped into it, believing that they were jumping over a wall, notwithstanding that the shepherd weeping and shouting set himself with arms and breast in front of them.

The second faction sets itself against our vulgar tongue with the aid of a knavish excuse. There are many who love rather to be reputed than to be masters; and in order to avoid the opposite, that is to say, that they may not fail of being deemed such, they always lay the blame on the material supplied to them for their art, or on their tool, as the bad smith blames the iron which he has to use, and the bad lute-player blames his lute, thinking thus to lay the blame of a bad knife or a bad tune on the iron or on the lute and to shift it from himself. Such are certain men, no few in number, who wish that mankind should deem them orators; and in order to excuse themselves for not speaking or for speaking badly, they accuse and blame their material, their own vulgar tongue, and praise that used by others which they are not called upon to handle. And

let him who would know how far the iron in question is to be blamed observe what products are made of it by good workmen, and he will know the wickedness of those who by blaming it hope to screen themselves. Against these Tully protests at the beginning of one of his books which is called the book *Concerning the End of Things Good* because in his time men blamed the Latin of Rome and praised Greek for reasons similar to those for which these men now vilify the speech of Italy and extol that of Provence.

The third faction sets itself against our vulgar tongue through greed of vain glory. There are many who think that by depicting things set forth in some foreign language and by commending this, they will reap more admiration than by depicting things native to their own. And doubtless those who understand a foreign language well, deserve some praise for ability, but it is blameable when praising it to overstep the truth in order to boast of such an acquisition.

The fourth faction attacks with an objection prompted by envy. As has been said above, envy exists only where there is some kind of equality. Men of the same language are on a level as regards the vulgar tongue; and envy is begotten because one individual cannot use it as well as another. The envious man then advances his objection not by blaming the speaker for not knowing how to speak, but by blaming that which is the material of his production, in order that by disparaging his work from that side he may rob the speaker of honour and reputation; as if a man should blame the steel of a sword, in order to throw blame, not on the steel, but on the whole work of the maker.

The fifth and last faction is impelled by cowardice of mind. The high-souled man always magnifies himself in his heart,

and so the mean-spirited on the contrary rates himself at less than his real worth. And because to magnify or to vilify are always relative to something, by comparison with which the high-souled man deems himself great and the mean-spirited man deems himself little, it comes to pass that the high-souled man always makes every one else less, and the mean-spirited always makes them greater than they are. And because a man always applies that standard with which he measures himself to his own concerns, which are as it were part of himself, it comes to pass that his own concerns always appear to the high-souled man greater, and those of others always appear less excellent than they are, while the mean-spirited man always thinks his own concerns are worth little, and those of others much. Therefore many, through this cowardice, disparage their own vulgar tongue and exalt that of others, and all such as these are the execrable wretches of Italy who hold cheap that precious vulgar tongue, which, if it is worthless in any respect, is so only when it is heard from the meretricious lips of these adulterers, by whose wicked guidance those blind men walk of whom I made mention when treating of the first cause.

XII. When from the windows of a house flames of fire are plainly seen issuing forth, if a man should ask whether the inside of that house be on fire, and another should answer him 'yes', I could not well decide which of the two would be the more ridiculous. In the same way for the reasons set forth above, if a man should ask me whether I entertained love for my native speech and I should answer him 'yes', it would be as foolish for him to address his question to me as for me to reply to it. But nevertheless I ought to show that I feel not only love, but most perfect love for



my native tongue, and furthermore I ought to censure her adversaries. In proving this to any one who will rightly understand, I shall say first how I became her friend and then how this friendship was confirmed.

I say that (as we may see Tully writing in his book *On Friendship* in harmony with the opinion of the Philosopher, set forth in the eighth and ninth books of the *Ethics*), nearness and goodness are causes naturally productive of love ; kindness, common aims, and intercourse are causes that increase it. And all these causes are present to engender and to strengthen the love which I bear to my own vulgar tongue, as I shall briefly explain.

Anything is nearer to a man in proportion as it is in closer union with him than anything else of its own kind. Hence of all men a son is nearest to his father, and of all the arts medicine is nearest to the physician and music to the musician, because they are more closely than anything else united with them : of all countries, that is nearest to a man in which he himself resides because it is most closely united with him. And so a man's own tongue is nearest to him inasmuch as it is most closely united with him, for this singly and alone was in his mind before any other, and is united with him not only intrinsically but accidentally, in so far as it is allied with the persons who are nearest to him, that is his parents and his fellow citizens and his own people. Such is his own native language which is not only nearest, but in the highest degree nearest to every man. Wherefore if nearness is the seed of friendship, as has been said above, it is plain that this is among the causes of the love which I bear to my native speech, namely, that it is far nearer to me than any other language. The above-mentioned reason, namely, that that which alone exists first in the

whole mind is more closely united with it, induced people to adopt the practice of making the first-born the sole heirs, as being nearest of all, and, because they were nearest of all, most loved.

Further, goodness made me the friend of my native speech. And here we must know that every good quality that is peculiar to anything is lovely in that thing, as in the male sex having a thick beard, and in the female sex being quite free from a beard in any part of the face, or as in a sleuth-hound to have a keen scent, and in a greyhound to run well. And, moreover, the more distinctive any quality is the more lovely it is; so that, although every virtue is lovely in a man, that is loveliest in him which is most distinctively human, and such is justice, which exists only in the rational or intellectual part of a man, that is, in his will. This is so lovely that, as the Philosopher says in the fifth book of the *Ethics*, her enemies such as thieves and robbers love her, and therefore we see that her opposite, namely, injustice, is most of all hateful, as, for example, treachery, ingratitude, falsehood, theft, rapine and deceit and the like. All of these are such inhuman sins that long custom allows a man to speak of himself in order to exonerate himself from the reproach of these, as has been said above, and allows him to say that he is faithful and loyal. And of this virtue I will speak more fully in the fourteenth Tractate, and omitting it here I return to the matter in hand. It is therefore proved that the goodness which is most loved and commended in anything is most distinctive of it, and it must be seen what that goodness is. We see that in everything relating to discourse, the clear showing forth of the conception is most lovely and commendable. This, therefore, is its foremost goodness; and inasmuch as this is found in our vulgar

tongue, as has been clearly proved above in another chapter, it is plain that it must be reckoned among the causes of the love which I bear to her, since, as has been said above, goodness is a cause that begets love.

XIII. Now that I have told how in my native speech those two qualities exist which make me her friend, that is nearness to myself and distinctive goodness, I will tell how by kindness and by harmony of desire and by goodwill inspired by long familiarity, friendship is strengthened and increased.

I say, firstly, that I have myself received the greatest benefits from her. Moreover we must know that of all benefits, that is the greatest which is most precious to the receiver, and nothing is so precious as that for the sake of which everything else is desired; and all other things are desired for the perfection of him who desires them. Therefore, inasmuch as a man has two kinds of perfection, one primary and one secondary (the first being the source of his existence, the second that of his goodness), if my native speech has been the cause both of the former and of the latter, she has conferred the greatest benefit on me: and that she has been the cause of my being, if I did not admit this,<sup>n</sup> may briefly be shown.

Is it not conformable to the nature of a thing that it should have many efficient causes, although one of these be more efficient than all the rest? Thus fire and the hammer are among the efficient causes of a knife, although the most efficient cause is the smith. This vulgar tongue of mine brought together my two parents, for they conversed in it, even as the fire disposes the iron for the use of the smith who makes the knife. Wherefore it is plain that my

native tongue had a share in begetting me, and thus is, in a sense, the cause of my being. Moreover, this my native speech ushered me into the path of knowledge which is our final perfection, in so far as I began Latin with her aid, and with her aid I learned it, Latin which afterwards opened me the way to go onwards : and thus it is obvious to all and is by me acknowledged that she has been to me the greatest of benefactors.

She has also had one and the same desire with me, which may be proved thus. Everything naturally desires its own preservation, so that if the vulgar tongue could frame a desire for herself, she would desire to be preserved : and she would be preserved, if she should shape herself so as to be more stable, and she could not acquire more stability than by uniting herself with number and with rime. And this same desire has been mine, which is so obvious as not to require evidence. Wherefore my aim and that of my native tongue has been one and the same. By this agreement, therefore, our friendship has been strengthened and increased.

Moreover, the goodwill arising from intercourse has been present; for from my earliest days I have had goodwill to her and fellowship with her, and have made use of her in deliberating, explaining, and questioning. Wherefore if friendship grows by intercourse as sensible experience proves, it is evident that in me it has grown most of all, as I have been all my life conversant with this my native tongue. Thus all the causes that beget and increase friendship are seen to have concurred in this friendship of mine, whence it follows that not only love, but most perfect love, is what I ought to feel towards her, and do feel. •

Thus as I turn my gaze backwards and gather together the reasons already mentioned, it can be seen that this bread

with which the meats of the Canzoni which follow are to be eaten is sufficiently cleansed of its stains, and of the reproach that it is made of common meal. Wherefore it is now time to think of serving the meats. This commentary shall be that bread mixed with barley with which thousands shall be filled; and baskets full of it shall remain over for me. This shall be a new light and a new sun, which shall rise when the old sun shall set, and shall shine on those who are in darkness and mist because of the old sun which gives no light to them.

# SECOND TRACTATE

## SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

*First Canzone.* In the first Canzone the poet speaks of the struggle which has taken place in his soul between the thought of his former lady who is now an angel in glory, and the thought of another lady into whose eyes Love constrains him to look. In the Commentary this Canzone is divided into three parts. In the first part, which is comprised in the first stanza, the poet addresses the Intelligences or angels who move the third Heaven, and tells them of his state. In the second part, consisting of the next three stanzas, he describes the conflict which is going on within him. This part contains two subdivisions. In the first subdivision, or second stanza, he distinguishes the two contending thoughts. In the second subdivision, or third and fourth stanzas, he tells how each thought appeals to him in turn. In the third part, or *tornata*, with which the Canzone concludes, the poet bids his song take comfort by reflecting that those who cannot understand her meaning may still admire her beauty.

## COMMENTARY

(1) At the outset, Dante states that in his comment on all the Canzoni, he will explain both the literal, and the allegorical sense. He distinguishes between four senses of writings: the literal, which lies on the surface; the allegorical, which is the truth underlying the former; the moral, which conveys a lesson of life and conduct; and the anagogical, or spiritual, which refers to heavenly things. Reasons are added to show why the literal sense, as including the others, must

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first be determined. Any other order would be impossible and unreasonable. (II) Literally explained, the first Canzone says that Venus had completed two revolutions when a gentle Lady appeared to the poet in company with Love. The victory which the new thought concerning this lady obtained over the former thought concerning Beatrice causes him to address the celestial powers which gave the former its strength. He then states how the contents of the Canzone are to be divided. (III) To make the literal meaning of the first part clear, he must say who are these whom he addresses, and what is the third heaven which they move. This leads him to discuss the number of the heavens. Aristotle enumerated eight heavens; Ptolemy recognized the existence of a ninth. (IV) The first eight heavens are to be assigned to the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and the fixed Stars. Beyond these is the Crystalline heaven, afterwards called the *primum mobile*; and outside all the Church has placed the Empyrean, the abode of the Deity and the blessed Spirits, which exists in the *Primal Mind*. He then describes the construction of the heavens with their respective poles and equator, and of the Epicycle of Venus. (V) The nature of the beings who move the heavens is explained. They are substances separate from matter, in other words, angelic Intelligences, and are infinite in number. After referring to the opinions of Plato, Aristotle, and the Heathen, Dante in general agreement with Aristotle affirms that the contemplative life is the highest, and is, therefore, the life of the Angels; and that the thought of certain Angels constitutes the motion of the heavens. Angels are innumerable, for even man can conceive that God has created them in infinite number. Man sees these things but darkly. (VI) The first revelation made to us by the Saviour was the appearance of an angel, His great ambassador to Mary. Holy Church teaches that there are three Hierarchies of Angels, each divided into three Orders. These are distributed among the several heavens, and the manner of their contemplation is determined by the nature of the Divine Trinity. This division assigns the Thrones

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to Venus. Virgil, Ovid, and Alfraganus are cited with reference to the function and motion of the third heaven. Whatever doubts there may be as to the influence at work in each case, it is certain that every movement is due to the thought of the Intelligence whose special function it is. (VII) The poet further explains the meaning of his prayer for audience, the reason why he addresses the powers invoked, the inducement offered to them, and the meaning of various terms employed in the Canzone. (VIII) He then passes to the second part of the Canzone, and its two subdivisions. The first subdivision tells how his former thought is concerned with a lady in heaven, the latter with another lady whose eyes appeal to the affection of the intellect. Thought, soul, and certain other terms are also defined. (IX) He then speaks further of the two contending thoughts, first removing a difficulty which might be felt in referring the second thought to the Intelligences of the third heaven, because the first thought, against which it strove, was also inspired by them. They are supreme only over what is on earth, and Beatrice is now in bliss. This leads to a digression on immortality and its high import alike in pagan and in Christian teaching. (X) He explains further the expressions used in the Canzone, especially the mention of his own eyes and those of the Lady, stating incidentally how impressions enter the eye so as to be stamped on the imagination. (XI) He then goes on to consider the reasons which the spirit of love alleges in favour of the second Lady, especially the qualities of pity and courtesy. (XII) Finally he comes to the last part of the Canzone, and explains what is meant by a *tornata*, and by the beauty and goodness of the Canzone. (XIII) Having thus displayed the literal meaning of the Canzone he passes on to the allegorical and true explanation, saying how, in his desire to find consolation for the loss of his soul's first delight, he turned to the study of Boethius's book *On Consolation*, and to Tully's treatise *On Friendship*, and through them was led on to the study of Philosophy which after about thirty months banished all other thoughts. His Canzone though referring to Philosophy was written



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in the vulgar tongue ostensibly about a gentle lady, because Philosophy in her own person was too exalted to be praised in this tongue, and because men would more easily credit him with love for a Lady than for Philosophy. As the Canzone is thus an allegory of Philosophy, the third heaven and its movers have also to receive an allegorical interpretation. (XIV) Heaven allegorically interpreted signifies scientific knowledge, and the Heavens are the Sciences. Three points of resemblance between the Heavens and the Sciences are mentioned. The Seven Sciences of the *Trivium* and *Quadrivium* correspond to the first seven heavens, Physic and Metaphysic to the eighth, Moral Science to the ninth, and Theology to the tenth. The resemblances between each of the Sciences of the *Trivium* and *Quadrivium*, and the corresponding Star are stated at length. (XV) Three properties of the eighth heaven in which it resembles Physic and three in which it resembles Metaphysic, are mentioned. The Galaxy, about which different accounts are given in the Old and New Translations of Aristotle, is specially noted. Reasons are further given for the comparison of Moral Philosophy with the Crystalline heaven or *primum mobile* and of the Divine Science, or Theology with the Empyrean. This explanation shows that the third heaven is Rhetoric; (XVI) and that the movers of the third heaven are the Rhetoricians such as Boethius and Tully. So the Lady of the second stanza is Philosophy, and her eyes the demonstrations of Philosophy. A moral sense is noted in the third stanza, and the meaning of the fourth becomes plain. The miracles of the Lady will be hereafter explained.

## SECOND TRACTATE

### FIRST CANZONE

*I'oi che intendendo il terzo ciel movete.*

YE who by thought move the third heaven, listen to the discourse that is in my heart, which I know not how to address to others, so strange it seemeth to me. The heaven which doth obey your influence, gentle creatures that ye are, draweth me into the plight in which I am. Hence my discourse of the life which I undergo seemeth fitly to be addressed to you. Therefore I pray you give me your attention thereto. I will tell you of the new thing in my heart, how the sad soul weepeth therein, and how against my soul there discourseth a spirit who cometh hither on the rays of your star.

A suave Thought, who went his way oft-times to the feet of your Lord, was wont to be life to my sorrowing heart. There he beheld a Lady glorified, of whom he spake to me so sweetly, that the soul said 'I desire to depart'. Now appeareth one who putteth him to flight, and hath lordship over me with such might that my heart trembleth thereat, so as to be seen without. He maketh me to look upon a lady, and saith, 'Let him who would see his salvation take care to gaze into the eyes of this lady, if he fear not anguish of sighs.'

Thus doth meet with an adversary, who destroyeth him, that lowly Thought who is wont to speak to me of an angel crowned in heaven. My soul weepeth, so sore doth she yet

grieve thereat, and saith, 'Ah, woe is me ! how fleeth away that Thought of pity who hath consoled me.' This wearied soul saith of mine eyes, 'What an hour it was when such a lady looked on them ! And why did ye not give credence to me concerning her ?' I said, 'Truly in her eyes must he be set who slayeth all my peers.' And to have known thereof availed me not to hinder mine eyes from gazing on him, whereby I am slain.

'Thou art not slain, but thou art dismayed, O soul of ours who thus lamentest,' saith a gentle young spirit of love : 'For this beauteous lady whose power thou feelest hath transformed thy life so much that thou art affrighted thereat, so faint-hearted art thou become ! Behold how full of pity and how lowly she is, sage and courteous in her greatness. And think to call her 'Mistress' henceforth. For if thou deceivest not thyself, thou shalt behold adornment of such lofty miracles that thou shalt say, 'Love, my very Lord, behold thy handmaid, have thy will of me.'

O Canzone, methinks that few shall be those who shall rightly understand thy argument, so wearisome and hard thy speech proclaimeth it. Wherefore if by chance it come to pass that thou goest into the presence of such as seem to thee not to be rightly acquainted therewith, then I pray thee comfort thyself again saying to them, well-beloved new song of mine, 'Take note at least how beautiful I am.'

I. After that by this prefatory discourse, my bread has been sufficiently prepared, through my own ministration, in the preceding Tractate, the season calls and requires my ship to leave harbour. Wherefore, with the mainsail of reason adjusted to the breeze of my desire I launch on the deep, with hope of pleasant voyage and of wholesome and

commendable harbour at the end of my repast. But in order that this my fare may profit more, I will, before the first course comes on, show how it should be eaten.

I say that, as is affirmed in the first chapter, it is meet for this exposition to be both literal and allegorical. And to make this intelligible, it should be known that writings can be understood and ought to be expounded chiefly in four senses. The first is called literal, and this is that sense which does not go beyond the strict limits of the letter; the second is called allegorical, and this is disguised under the cloak of such stories, and is a truth hidden under a beautiful fiction. Thus Ovid says that Orpheus with his lyre made beasts tame, and trees and stones move towards himself; that is to say that the wise man by the instrument of his voice makes cruel hearts grow mild and humble, and those who have not the life of Science and of Art move to his will, while they who have no rational life are as it were like stones. And wherefore this disguise was invented by the wise will be shown in the last Tractate but one. Theologians indeed do not apprehend this sense in the same fashion as poets; but, inasmuch as my intention is to follow here the custom of poets, I will take the allegorical sense after the manner which poets use.

The third sense is called moral; and this sense is that for which teachers ought as they go through writings intently to watch for their own profit and that of their hearers; as in the Gospel when Christ ascended the Mount to be transfigured, we may be watchful of His taking with Himself the three Apostles out of the twelve; whereby morally it may be understood that for the most secret affairs we ought to have few companions.

The fourth sense is called anagogic, that is, above the

senses ; and this occurs when a writing is spiritually expounded, which even in the literal sense by the things signified likewise gives intimation of higher matters belonging to the eternal glory ; as can be seen in that song of the prophet which says that, when the people of Israel went up out of Egypt, Judea was made holy and free. And although it be plain that this is true according to the letter, that which is spiritually understood is not less true, namely, that when the soul issues forth from sin she is made holy and free as mistress of herself.

And in demonstrating this the literal sense ought always to come first, as being that sense in the expression of which the others are all included, and without which it would be impossible and irrational to give attention to the other meanings, and most of all to the allegorical. Impossible, because in everything which has inside and outside it is impossible to reach the inside without first reaching the outside. Wherefore, inasmuch as in writings the literal meaning is always the outside, it is impossible to arrive at the other meanings, especially the allegorical, without first arriving at the literal. It is impossible, moreover, because in everything natural and artificial it is not possible to proceed to the form, unless the matter on which the form must be imposed is first made ready for it ; as, for example, it is impossible for the form of gold to come into being if the matter, that is to say its substance, is not first set in order and prepared ; or for the form of the ark to come into being if the matter, that is the wood, is not first arranged and prepared. Wherefore inasmuch as the literal meaning is always the subject matter of the others, especially of the allegorical, it is impossible to attain to the knowledge of the others before attaining to the knowledge of the first. Further-

more, it is impossible, because in everything natural and artificial it is not possible to go forward if the foundation is not first laid, as in a house and in studying. Wherefore, inasmuch as demonstration is the building up of Science, and the literal explanation is the foundation of all other kinds, especially of the allegorical, it is impossible to reach the others before reaching this.

Moreover, supposing that it were possible, it would be irrational, that is out of order, and therefore progress would be attended with much difficulty and many mistakes. Wherefore, as the Philosopher says in the first book of the *Physics*, Nature wills that in our attainment of knowledge, progress should be made with order, that is, by going on from that which we know better, to that which we know less well. I say that Nature wills, in so far as this method of attaining knowledge is by nature innate in us. And therefore if the other senses are less intelligible than the literal (and it is plainly manifest that they are so), it would be irrational to go on to demonstrate those if the literal sense were not first demonstrated. I, therefore, for these reasons, when treating of each Canzone, will in any case first discuss the literal meaning, and after that will speak of its allegory, that is, of the hidden truth contained in it, and sometimes I shall touch incidentally on the other meanings as place and time shall permit.

II. Therefore at the outset I say that after the departure of that blessed Beatrice who lives in heaven with the angels and on earth with my soul, the star of Venus had twice revolved in her circle, which brings her to view at evening and in the morning, according to the two different seasons, when that gentle lady of whom I made mention at the end

of the *New Life* first appeared before mine eyes, escorted by love, and took a high place in my mind. And as I have discoursed in the little book now cited, it came to pass more from her gentleness than from my choice that I consented to be hers ; for she showed herself moved by such passion of pity for my widowed life that the spirits of mine eyes became most friendly to her. And when they were thus become her friends, thereupon they wrought so within me that my will and pleasure was content to wait upon that image. But inasmuch as love is not born in a moment, nor in a moment grows up and comes to perfection, but needs some time and nourishment of thought, most of all there where there are counter thoughts which hinder it, there was of necessity before this new love was perfected, many a battle between the thought that nourished it and that which ran counter to it, and still held the fortress of my mind on behalf of that glorious Beatrice. For the one thought was continually reinforced from the quarter which lay before me, and the other from the quarter of memory which lay behind. And the succour from before, as being that which hindered me from turning my face in any way backward, every day waxed stronger, which the other could not do. Wherefore this plight appeared so wonderful and also hard to endure that I could not abide it, and almost crying aloud to excuse myself for the changefulness in which I seemed to myself to show lack of fortitude, I directed my voice to that quarter whence proceeded the victory won by the new thought, which as being virtue celestial had completely conquered ; and I began by saying ‘Ye who by thought move the third heaven’.

In order to apprehend clearly the meaning of this Canzone, it is meet first to take cognizance of its different parts so

that its intent may afterwards easily be seen. In order, therefore, that it may not be necessary to prefix these remarks in expounding the other Canzoni I say that I purpose to maintain in all the other Tractates the order which will be adopted in this.

I say then that the Canzone prefixed is composed of three principal parts. The first part is the first stanza of this, in which certain Intelligences (or Angels as according to more common usage we should call them) are invited to listen to that which I intend to say, and these angels preside over the revolution of the heaven of Venus, as being those who move it. The second part consists of the three stanzas which follow after the first, in which is made clear that which was spiritually heard within passing between the different thoughts. The third consists of the fifth and last stanza in which a man speaks as is wont to his work itself, as if to strengthen it. And all these three parts are now to be made plain in order as has been said above.

III. If we are more clearly to perceive the literal sense of the first part in the division made above, to which attention is now directed, we must know who and how many are those who are called to listen to me, and what is this third heaven which, as I affirm, is moved by them. And first I will speak of the heaven, afterwards I will speak of those whom I address. And although these matters, as far as concerns their reality, can be but very imperfectly known, that much of them which human reason perceives has more delight than the abundance and certainty of the things of which we judge by sense, according to the opinion of the Philosopher in his book *On Animals*.

I say, therefore, that concerning the number and position of the heavens different opinions are held by many, although



at the last the truth be discovered. Aristotle, merely following the ancient misapprehension of astrologers, believed that there were only eight heavens, the outermost of which, containing the whole, was that in which are the fixed stars, namely, the eighth sphere; and beyond this he thought that there was no other. He also believed that the heaven of the sun adjoined that of the moon, that is to say, was second from us. And this mistaken opinion of his any one who wishes can see in the second part of *Heaven and the World*, which is in the second of the books about Nature. However, he excuses himself for this in the twelfth book of the *Metaphysics*, in which he shows plainly that he had merely followed the opinion of others where he had to speak of Astrology.

Afterwards Ptolemy perceived that the eighth sphere was swayed by several movements, as he saw that its circle deviated from the true circle which turns everything from East to West. Constrained by the principles of Philosophy, which necessarily demands the simplest *primum mobile*, he therefore assumed that another heaven lay beyond that of the stars, and that this caused the revolution from East to West. This revolution, I say, is completed in about twenty-four hours, that is to say, in twenty-three hours and fourteen-fifteenths of an hour, roughly reckoned. So that, according to him, and according to the opinion current in Astrology and in Philosophy since these movements were perceived, the heavens in motion are nine in number, and their position is manifest and determined, as the senses and the reason apprehend by the aid of Perspective, Arithmetic and Geometry, and of other sensible experiences. So in an eclipse of the sun the moon appears to the senses to be below the sun, and to this Aristotle bears witness, who saw with his eyes, as

he tells us in the second part of *Heaven and the World*, the moon when half full advance below Mars with her dark side forward and Mars remain hidden until he reappeared on the other side, viz. the bright side of the moon which was towards the West.

IV. And the order of their position is this. The first heaven which is reckoned is that which contains the moon, the second is that which contains Mercury, the third that which contains Venus, the fourth that which contains the sun, the fifth that which contains Mars, the sixth that which contains Jupiter, the seventh that which contains Saturn, the eighth is that of the fixed stars, the ninth is that which is not perceptible to sense except for the movement mentioned above. This heaven many call the Crystalline, that is to say, the diaphanous, or wholly transparent heaven. However, outside all these, Catholics place the Empyrean heaven, that is to say, the luminous heaven, or heaven of flame ; and it is held to be immovable because it has in itself in each several part that which its matter desires. And this gives the reason why the *primum mobile* has the swiftest movement, because on account of the most fervid longing which each part of that ninth heaven adjoining the former has to be united with each part of that heaven, namely, the divinest tenth heaven which is at rest, it turns round therein with such desire that its velocity is almost inconceivable. And peaceful and at rest is the abode of that highest Godhead who alone completely beholds Himself. This is the abode of the blessed spirits as Holy Church maintains who cannot lie. And Aristotle also, to one who rightly understands him, seems to be of this opinion in the first part of *Heaven and the World*. This is the sovereign edifice of the world, in

which all the world is enclosed and beyond which there is naught. And it exists not in space, but received form only in the Primal Mind which the Greeks call Protonoe. This is that magnificence of which the Psalmist spoke when he says to God, 'Thy magnificence is uplifted above the heavens.' And thus, to sum up what has been said, it appears that there are ten heavens, of which the heaven of Venus is the third ; and this is the heaven of which mention is made in that part which I am about to explain.

Now we should know that each heaven below the Crystalline has two poles fixed as regards itself, while in the ninth heaven they are fixed and stationary, and not changeable from any point of view. And they each, the ninth as well as the rest, have a circle which may be called the Equator of its own proper heaven, and in every part of its revolution is equally removed from both poles, as any one can see by the use of his senses, if he spins an apple or any other round body. And in each heaven this circle is more rapid in its motion than any other part of its heaven, as any one who rightly reflects can perceive. And each part moves the more rapidly the nearer it is to this circle, and the more remote and the nearer to the pole it is, the more slowly it moves, inasmuch as the circle of its revolution is smaller, and must of necessity be completed within the same time as the larger. I say, moreover, that the nearer a heaven is to the circle of its equator, the more noble it is in comparison with its poles, because it has more movement and more actuality and more life and more form, and more nearly adjoins that heaven which is above it, and consequently has more of virtue. Whence the stars of the starry heaven have more of virtue in comparison with each other the nearer they are to this circle.

And on the hump of this circle, in the heaven of Venus which at present is our subject, there is a small sphere which revolves of itself in that heaven, and the circle of this sphere is by the astrologers called an epicycle. This small sphere, like the large one, turns its two poles ; so also this small one has its equatorial circle, so also it is the more noble the nearer it is to the equator ; and on the arc or hump of this circle is fixed the most brilliant star Venus. And although it be said that there are ten heavens, in strict truth this number does not comprise them all, because that of which mention has been made, namely, the epicycle in which the star is fixed, is a heaven or sphere by itself ; and it is not of the same essence with that which carries it, although it is more nearly of one nature with it than with the rest, and is spoken of as one heaven with it, and both are named after the star. We cannot at present discuss how it is with the other heavens and the other stars. Let that suffice which has been said of the truth about the third heaven, which I have in view at present, and about which all that is at present necessary has been fully explained.

V. Since in the last chapter it has been shown what this third heaven is, and how it is ordered in itself, it remains to show who those are that move it. We should know then, in the first place, that the movers of that heaven are Substances separate from matter, that is, Intelligences, which the common people call Angels. And of these creatures, as of the heavens, divers people have formed divers opinions, although the truth be ascertained. There were certain philosophers of whom Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* appears to be one (although in the first part of *Heaven and the World* he incidentally appears to think otherwise), all of

whom believed that there are only so many of these Intelligences as there are circular movements in the heavens and no more, and argued that the rest would have been eternally useless without any function, an impossibility, inasmuch as their existence is their function. There were others, like Plato, a most eminent man, who assumed not only that there are as many Intelligences as there are movements of the heaven, but also as many as there are species of things, just as there is one species for all men, and another for all gold, and another for all riches, and so on ; and they would have it that as the Intelligences of the heavens are producers of these movements, each one of its own, so these other Intelligences are producers of everything else, and exemplars each one of its own species ; and Plato called them ‘ ideas ’, which is equivalent to calling them universal forms and natures. The Gentiles called them Gods and Goddesses, although they did not think of them as philosophically as Plato ; and they adored their images and made for them splendid temples, as for Juno whom they called Goddess of Power, or for Vulcan whom they called God of Fire, or for Pallas or Minerva whom they called Goddess of Wisdom, and for Ceres whom they called Goddess of Corn. That such was their opinion is made clear by the testimony of the poets, wherever they depict the custom of the Gentiles both in their sacrifices and in their creed, and is further manifested in many ancient names which survive as names or surnames of places and of ancient buildings, as any one who wishes can easily ascertain.

And although the foregoing opinions were derived from human reason and from no slight experience, the truth was still not perceived by them through defect both of reason and of instruction ; for it can be seen by the aid of reason

alone that the creatures above mentioned are much more numerous than the effects which men can apprehend. And the first reason is this: no one, whether Philosopher, or Gentile, or Jew, or Christian, or member of any sect, doubts that the angels are full of all blessedness, either all or the greater part of them, or that these blessed ones are in a state of the greatest perfection. Wherefore inasmuch as human nature, as it exists here, has not merely one blessedness but two, viz. that of the civil and that of the contemplative life, it would be unreasonable if we were to find that these beings had the blessedness of the active, that is, of the civil life, in the government of the world, and had not that of the contemplative which is more excellent and more divine. And inasmuch as that life which has the blessedness of governing cannot have the other also, because their intellect is one and continuous, it is meet that there should be other beings outside this ministry who live only in contemplation. And because this life is more divine, and the more divine a thing is the more it is like God, it is manifest that this life is more beloved by God; and if it is more beloved by Him its power of conferring bliss is more ample; and if this power has been made more ample, He has apportioned more living beings to this life than to the other. Wherefore it is concluded that the number of these creatures is much greater than is shown by the effects. And this does not contradict what Aristotle seems to say in the tenth book of the *Ethics*, namely, that the contemplative life befits separate substances, as the speculative life alone befits them. However the rotation of the heaven by which the world is steered follows the contemplation of certain beings, the world being as it were a civil order conceived in the contemplation of those who move it.<sup>11</sup> The second reason is that no effect is

greater than its cause, because no cause can impart that which it does not possess. Wherefore, inasmuch as the divine Intellect is the cause of all things, especially of the human intellect, for the human intellect does not exceed, but is immeasurably exceeded by the divine, then if we, for the above reasons and many others, understand God to have had the power of creating almost countless spiritual creatures, it is plain that He has created this larger number of them. Plenty of other reasons can be seen, but let these suffice for the present.

Nor let any one be surprised if these and other reasons which we might allege for this belief are not completely demonstrated, for precisely on this account we ought to admire the excellence of these beings, which transcends the vision of the human mind, as the Philosopher says in the second book of the *Metaphysics*, and to affirm their existence. For sensuous perception, which is the beginning of our knowledge, being absent in their case, there shines in our intellect merely some light emanating from their most lively essence, so far as we see the above-mentioned reasons and many others; just as a man who has his eyes shut affirms that the air is luminous because a gleam from its brightness reaches him, or a ray of light such as passes through the pupils of a bat<sup>u</sup>; for just in the same way are the eyes of our intellect shut when the soul is bound and imprisoned by the organs of our body.

VI. It has been said that through defect of teaching the ancients did not see the truth as to spiritual creatures although that people of Israel was in part taught by its prophets, through whom in divers manners of speaking and in sundry ways God had spoken to them, as the Apostle says.

But we have been taught therein by Him who came from that Being, by Him who made them, by Him who preserves them, that is by the Emperor of the Universe, who is Christ Son of the Sovereign God and Son of Virgin Mary (very woman and daughter of Joachim and Anna), very Man who was put to death by us whereby He brought us life. Who was the light that lightens us in the darkness, as John Evangelist says, and who told us the truth of those things which we cannot know or truly see without Him. The first thing and the first secret which He showed us regarding them was one of the above-mentioned creatures, and this was His great Ambassador, who came to Mary a young damsel of thirteen years, on behalf of the Holy King celestial.

This Saviour of ours said with His own lips that the Father was able to give Him many legions of angels. He did not disclaim when it was said to Him that the Father had given charge to the angels that they should minister to Him and serve Him. Wherefore it is plain that these creatures exist in largest number since His Spouse and Secretary, Holy Church (of whom Solomon says, 'Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness laden with delights leaning upon her Beloved'), affirms, believes, and asserts that those noblest creatures are almost innumerable, and divides them into three Hierarchies, that is to say, into three holy or divine Princedoms. Each Hierarchy has three Orders, so that the Church holds and affirms that there are nine Orders of spiritual creatures. The first is that of the Angels, the second that of the Archangels, the third that of the Thrones. These three Orders make up the first Hierarchy, not first in respect of nobility, nor first in respect of creation, for the others are nobler, and they were all created together, but



first in respect of our ascent to their height. Afterwards come the Dominions, next the Virtues, next the Principalities ; and these make up the second Hierarchy. Above these are the Powers and the Cherubim, and above all are the Seraphim ; and these make up the third Hierarchy. And both the number in which the Hierarchies, and that in which the Orders exist, chiefly determine the manner of their contemplation ; for inasmuch as the divine Majesty exists in three Persons who are of one Substance, it is possible to contemplate these in triple fashion. For it is possible to contemplate the supreme power of the Father, upon which the first Hierarchy gazes, that is first in nobility, and last in the order of our enumeration. And it is possible to contemplate the supreme wisdom of the Son, and upon this the second Hierarchy gazes. And it is possible to contemplate the supreme and most fervent love of the Holy Spirit ; and upon this the third Hierarchy gazes which is the nearest to us, and imparts to us of the gifts which it receives. And inasmuch as each person of the divine Trinity may be regarded in triple wise, there are in each Hierarchy three Orders who contemplate in different ways. It is possible to consider the Father, paying no regard save to Him alone ; and this contemplation is the function of the Seraphim, who have a clearer vision of the first cause than any other angelic nature. It is possible to consider the Father in respect to the relation He bears to the Son, that is as the Son is separated from, and as He is united with Him ; and this is the object contemplated by the Cherubim. It is possible, moreover, to consider the Father in respect of the procession of the Holy Spirit from Him, as the Spirit is separated from and is united with Him ; and this is the contemplation allotted to the Powers. And in this same

way it is possible to meditate on the Son and on the Holy Spirit. Wherefore it is meet that there should be nine sorts of contemplative Spirits, who should gaze upon that Light which alone beholds itself completely. One word here must not be left unsaid. I say that of all these Orders a certain number were lost as soon as they were created, to the amount perhaps of one tenth, and in order to replace these mankind was afterwards created. The moving heavens, which are nine, tell the numbers of Orders and of Hierarchies ; and the tenth heaven proclaims the very unity and fixedness of God. Wherefore the Psalmist says, 'The heavens tell the glory of God and the firmament proclaims His handiwork.' Wherefore it is reasonable to believe that the movers of the heaven of the moon belong to the order of the Angels ; those of Mercury to that of the Archangels, and those of Venus to that of the Thrones, who being by nature endowed with the love of the Holy Spirit exercise their function, which naturally goes with it, namely, the moving of this heaven replete with love. From this the form of the aforesaid heaven conceives a potent glow by which the souls here below are kindled to love according to their disposition. And because the ancients recognized that that heaven was the cause of love here below, they said that Love was the son of Venus ; as Virgil testifies in the first book of the *Aeneid* where Venus says to Love, 'Son, my strength, son of the highest Father, who heedest not the darts of Typhoeus' ; and Quid in the fifth book of the *Metamorphoses* when he makes Venus say to Love, 'Son, my weapons, my might.' And these, the Thrones, who are assigned to the government of this heaven are of no great number ; as to which the philosophers and the astrologers have held different opinions, corresponding to

the different opinions they have held about its rotations, although all are agreed in this, namely, that they are as numerous as the movements of the heaven. These movements, as is found briefly stated in the *Book of the Aggregation of the Stars*, are shown with fullest demonstration by the astrologers to be three. The first is that in accordance with which the star is moved along its epicycle ; the second that in accordance with which the epicycle is moved together with the whole heaven in concert with the heaven of the sun ; the third that in accordance with which the whole of that heaven moves, following the movement of the Starry Sphere from West to East, one degree in every hundred years. So that for these three motions there are three movers. Moreover, the whole of this sky moves and revolves with the epicycle from East to West once in every natural day. Whether this movement comes from some Intelligence, or whether it comes from the onrush of the *primum mobile* God knows, for it appears to me presumptuous to decide. These movers merely by means of understanding produce the rotation of that special object which each one moves. The noblest form of the heaven, which contains in itself the principle of this receptive nature, wheels round in contact with the motive power whose thought constitutes this heaven ; I do not say in bodily contact, but in contact with the virtue which is brought to bear upon it. These movers are those to whom my theme is directed and to whom I make my request.

VII. As has been said above in the third chapter of this Tractate, if we would rightly understand the first part of the Canzone before us, we must discourse of those heavens and of those who move them ; and we have discoursed of

them in the three last chapters. I say, therefore, to these whom I have shown to be the movers of the heaven of Venus, 'Ye who by thought' (that is, by intellect alone, as has been said above) 'move the third heaven listen to the discourse'; and I do not say 'listen' because they hear any sound, for they have no bodily sense; but when I say 'listen' I refer to that hearing which they have, namely, understanding by means of the intellect. I say, 'Listen to the discourse that is in my heart,' that is, which is within me, for it has not yet appeared without. And we must know that in the whole of this Canzone, both in the literal and in the allegorical sense, the heart is taken for the hidden man within, and not for any other particular part of the soul or body.

After I have summoned them to listen to that which I would say, I assign two reasons why it is meet for me to address them. The first is the strangeness of my condition, which has not been experienced by the rest of mankind and therefore could not be understood by them, as it is by those movers who conceive the effects which they bring about in their own activity. And I touch on this reason when I say, 'Which I know not how to address to others, so strange it seemeth to me.' The other reason is that when a man experiences a kindness or an injury he ought first to refer it to him who has done it, if he can, rather than to any other, in order that, if it be a kindness, he who has received it may show himself sensible of it towards his benefactor, and if it be an injury he may with soft words move the doer to kindly compassion. And on this reason I touch when I say, 'The heaven which obeyeth your influence, gentle creatures that ye are, draweth me into the plight in which I am': that is to say, your operation, namely, your

circular motion, is what has drawn me into my present plight. Thus I conclude, and affirm that I ought to address myself to them as I have said ; and this I express in these words, ‘ Hence my discourse of the life which I undergo seemeth fitly to be addressed to you.’

And after assigning these reasons I ask them to give heed to me when I say, ‘ Therefore I pray you give me your attention thereto.’ But since in every kind of discourse the speaker ought chiefly to be intent upon persuasion, that is, on charming his audience, for this is that kind of persuasion which is the beginning of all others, as every rhetorician knows ; and since the method of persuasion most potent for rendering a hearer attentive is the promise of telling him some fine new thing, I follow the prayer for a hearing with this persuasion or charm, by announcing to them my intention, which is to speak to them of new things, that is, of the division in my mind, and of great things, that is, of the influence of their star. And I speak of this in the last words of this first part, ‘ I will tell you of the new thing in my heart, how the sad soul weepeth therein, and how against my soul there discourseth a spirit who cometh hither on the rays of your star.’

And to help the full understanding of these words I say that this spirit is no other than an oft recurring thought which aims at commending and gracing this new lady ; and this soul is nothing else than another thought coupled with consent, which strives against this spirit and commends and graces the memory of that glorious Beatrice. But, moreover, inasmuch as the final sentence of my mind, that is, my consent, was given in favour of that thought which reinforced my memory, I call this latter ‘ soul ’ and the other thought ‘ spirit ’ ; just as we are wont to call by the name of

‘ the city ’ those who hold it, and not those who fight against it, although both parties be citizens.

I say, moreover, that this ‘ Spirit comes hither on the rays of the star ’, because it should be known that the rays of each heaven are the path by which their virtue descends upon the things below. And since the rays are nothing but an illumination which comes from the principle of light through the air as far as the thing illuminated, and since there is no light but in the region of the star because the rest of the heaven is diaphanous, namely, transparent, I do not say that this spirit, namely, this thought, comes from their heaven as a whole but from their star. Now this star, by reason of the nobility of those who move it, is of such efficacy that it has the greatest power over our souls and over everything else of ours, notwithstanding that it be far off from us, being distant, even when it is nearest to us, one hundred and sixty-seven times the distance of the centre of the earth from us, which is three thousand, two hundred and fifty miles. This is the explanation of the literal sense of the first part of the Canzone.

VIII. The words above spoken will make the literal sense of the first part sufficiently intelligible ; wherefore we must now turn our attention to the second in which is shown what I felt about the struggle within. This part has two subdivisions, for in the first, that is, the first stanza, I tell the nature of these conflicting thoughts so far as regards their root which was within me ; afterwards I tell what each of these conflicting thoughts said to me. And, therefore, to speak first of what was said by the part which lost the day, that is contained in the stanza which is the second of this division and the third of the Canzone.

To indicate, therefore, the meaning of the first subdivision, it must be known that things ought to be defined after the highest nobility of their form, as man after his reason and not after his senses, nor after anything else which is less noble. Hence when it is said that 'man lives', it must be understood that man uses his reason, which is especially his life and the actuality of his noblest part. Therefore whoever parts from his reason and uses only his sensitive part lives not as man but as beast; as the most excellent Boethius affirms when he says that 'he lives the life of an ass'. I speak unequivocally, because thought is the act peculiar to the reason; wherefore animals do not think for they have no reason, I do not mean merely the lower animals but those which have the appearance of a man with the spirit of a sheep or of some other loathsome beast. I say, therefore, that the 'life of my heart', that is, of the inner man, was wont to be 'a suave thought' ('suave' is equivalent to 'suasive', that is, charming, sweet, pleasant, delightful), and to be that thought which oft-times departed to the feet of the 'Lord' of those to whom I address myself, who is God; which is as much as to say that I in thought contemplated the kingdom of the blest. And forthwith I mention the final cause why I mounted up thither in thought, when I say, 'There he beheld a lady glorified,' in order to signify that I was and am assured by her gracious revelation that she was in heaven. Wherefore I, by thus thinking as intently as I could, went as if rapt thither.

Then I speak next of the effect of this thought in order to make its sweetness understood, which was such as to make me desirous of death that I might go thither where she was gone: and this I say in the words, 'Of whom he spake to me so sweetly that the soul said "I desire to depart".' And

this is the root of one of the conflicting thoughts in me. And it should be known that here the word 'thought' and not 'soul' is used for that which mounted up to behold that blessed one, because there was a thought specially concerned with that act. 'Soul' is taken, as has been said in the previous chapter, for thought generally, coupled with consent.

Afterwards, when I say 'Now appeareth one who putteth him to flight', I describe the root of that other conflicting thought, seeing that, as this thought above mentioned is wont to be my life, so a second appears who makes this one give way. I say 'to flight' in order to show that the second is counter to the other; because the one contrary naturally flees the other, and that which takes flight shows that it takes flight for want of valour. And I say that this thought which appears for the first time has power to lay hold of me and to conquer my whole soul, adding that it has lordship over me so that 'my heart', that is, my inner man, trembles, and my outer man indicates it in some new semblance.

After this I show the potency of this new thought by its effect, saying that it makes me gaze upon a lady, and speaks to me words of flattery, that is, discourses before mine eyes about my intellectual affection in order the better to persuade me by assuring me that the sight of her eyes is its salvation. And in order to make this more credible to the experienced soul, the thought says that no one should look into the eyes of this lady who fears 'anguish of sighs'. And that is a pretty figure of rhetoric which makes a thing appear outwardly to be divested of charm, while it is truly made charming within. This new thought of love could not better persuade my mind to consent than by discoursing profoundly on the virtue of that lady's eyes.



IX. Now that we have shown how and why love was born, and have displayed the contradiction which strove with me, we may fitly go on to disclose the meaning of that portion in which conflicting thoughts are contending in me. I say that it is meet first to speak on the side of the soul, that is, of the former thought, and afterwards of the other thought for this reason, namely, that what the speaker is chiefly bent on saying ought to be kept for the end, since what is said last is more lasting in the mind of the hearer. Wherefore inasmuch as I am bent on speaking and discoursing of that which is done by the operation of those beings to whom I address myself, rather than of what is undone by it, it was reasonable first to speak and discourse of the condition of that side which was being destroyed, and afterwards of that which was being brought to birth.

However, there arises a doubt here which cannot be passed over without being cleared up. Somebody might say, 'Inasmuch as love is the effect of these Intelligences whom I address, and that former feeling was love just as much as the latter, why does their virtue destroy the one and give birth to the other; since it might rather be expected to preserve the former, for the reason that every cause loves its own effect, and their virtue loving its effect preserves that former feeling.' To this question it may easily be answered that the effect of these Intelligences is love, as has been said; and since they cannot preserve this effect except in those subjects which are under the influence of their revolution, they transfer it from that quarter which is beyond their power to that quarter which is in their power, I mean from the soul departed from this life to the soul which exists here; just as human nature transfers the preservation of itself in the human form from

father to son, because it cannot preserve its effect in the father himself without a break. I use the term 'effect' in so far as soul and body conjoined are the effect of the soul ; for the soul which is departed lives on without a break in a nature which is more than human. So this question is resolved.

But since I have here touched on the immortality of the soul, I will make a digression and discourse about the soul ; for it will be well in speaking about this to bring to an end my discourse about that Beatrice alive in bliss, concerning whom I do not purpose to say anything more in this book. I assert by way of preface that of all brutal opinions that is most foolish, vilest, and most pestilent which holds that there is no other life after this, inasmuch as, if we turn over all the writings whether of the philosophers or of other wise writers, they all agree in this that there is in us some ever existing part. This is what Aristotle seems chiefly to maintain in his book *On the Soul* : this every Stoic has chiefly in mind : this Tully seems to maintain, especially in his short treatise *On Old Age* : this every poet who speaks conformably to the belief of the Gentiles seems to maintain : this every rule maintains whether of Jews, Saracens, Tartars, or of any others who live according to law of any kind. If all of these were deceived, an impossibility would follow which would be horrible even to mention. Every one is certain that human nature is the most perfect of all natures here below. This nobody denies and Aristotle affirms, when he says in the twelfth book of the *Animals*, that man is the most perfect of all the animals. Wherefore, inasmuch as many living creatures are wholly mortal as, for instance, brute beasts, all of whom are without this hope, that is to say, the hope of another life, while they live ; if our hope were

idle our loss would be greater than that of any other animal, inasmuch as there are many who ere now have given this present life in exchange for that. Thus it would follow that the most perfect animal, that is, man, would be the most imperfect, which is impossible ; and that that part, namely, his reason, which is his greatest perfection would be the cause of his greatest loss, which appears altogether a contradiction in terms. Moreover, it would follow that nature had been contradicting herself in implanting this hope in the human mind, since it has been said that many have hastened to meet death of the body in order to live in the future life ; and this too is impossible.

Moreover, we see constant experience of our immortality afforded by the presages of our dreams, which we could not have if there were in us no immortal part, inasmuch as, if we think about the matter exactly, the medium of revelation whether corporeal or incorporeal must needs be immortal. I say ‘corporeal or incorporeal’ on account of the different opinions which I find on this point : and that which is moved or receives its form by the agency of a power which immediately informs it, must bear a ratio to the informing power, and between mortal and immortal there can be no ratio.

Moreover, the most veracious doctrine of Christ assures us of this ; which doctrine is the Way the Truth and the Light : the Way because by it we enter without hindrance into the happiness of that immortality : the Truth because it is not liable to any error : the Light because it illumines us in the darkness of worldly ignorance. This doctrine, I say, makes us certain above all other reasoning, because He has given it to us who beholds and measures our immortality, which we cannot perfectly behold while our

immortal is mingled with our mortal part; but we behold the immortal perfectly by faith, and by reason we behold it, touched with the shadow of darkness which falls upon it owing to the mixture of mortal and immortal: and this ought to be our strongest argument that both one and the other exist in us. Thus I believe, thus I affirm, thus I am assured, that I shall pass to another better life after this where that glorified lady survives, of whom my soul was enamoured when I underwent that struggle which shall be told in the chapter following.

X. Returning to the matter before us, I say that in the stanza which begins 'Thus doth meet with an adversary who destroyeth him', I intend to make plain that which my mind discoursed to me within, that is, the old thought which is contrary to the new. And first I briefly exhibit the cause of its piteous words when I say 'Thus doth meet with an adversary who destroyeth him, that lowly thought who is wont to speak to me of an angel crowned in heaven.' This is that particular thought of which it was said above that it was 'wont to be life to the sorrowing heart'.

Afterwards, when I say 'My soul weepeth, so sore doth she still grieve thereat', I make it clear that my soul is still on the side of the former and is speaking with sadness; and I say that she utters words of lamentation almost as if she wondered at the sudden transformation, saying, 'Ah! woe is me! how fleeth away that thought of pity who hath consoled me.' She can rightly say 'consoled', for in her great loss that thought which mounted to heaven has given the soul much consolation.

Then afterwards I say that all my thought, namely, the soul which I call this wearied one, in order to excuse herself,

turns round and speaks against mine eyes. This is made clear in the words, 'This wearied soul saith of mine eyes.' And I affirm that she says of them and in opposition to them three things. Firstly, she says that she holds the hour accursed when this lady beheld them. And here it should be known that, although more things than one can enter the eye at one time, that which comes in a straight line into the point of the pupil is truly seen by it and alone is stamped on the imagination. And this is so because the nerve along which the visual spirit travels runs straight to that part, and, therefore, in truth one eye cannot look at another without being seen by it, because as the eye which beholds receives the form on the pupil along a straight line, so its own form travels along the same line into the eye which it beholds. And many times as the eye looks along this straight line the bow of him is discharged against whom no arms are proof. Therefore, when I say 'When such a lady beheld them', that is as much as to say what time her eyes and mine looked on each other.

The second thing the soul says is that she blames their disobedience in the words 'And why did they not believe me concerning her'.

Afterwards she proceeds to the third point and says that she ought not to blame herself for lack of forethought, but them for not obeying, since she declares that sometimes in speaking of this lady she had said that in her eyes there would needs have been power over me if she had had the way of entrance open; and this the soul affirms in the words 'I said, truly in her eyes &c.' And it may well be believed that my soul knew that her disposition was liable to be affected by the action of this lady and therefore feared it; for the act of the agent takes effect on the patient who is

disposed for it, as the Philosopher says in the second book *Of the Soul*. And, therefore, if wax had a spirit capable of fear it would be more afraid of coming under the rays of the sun than a stone would be, because its susceptibility is more strongly affected by the sun's rays when it receives them.

Lastly, the soul makes it clear by her speech that their presumption has been fraught with danger, when she says 'And to have known thereof availed me not, to hinder mine eyes from gazing on one by whom I am slain'. 'To hinder from gazing,' she says, on him of whom she had said before 'who slayeth my peers'. Thus she ends her speech which the new thought answers, as will be declared in the next chapter.

XI. Thus is shown the meaning of that part in which the soul speaks, that is, of the ancient thought which was destroyed. Now in what follows must be exhibited the meaning of the part wherein speaks the new thought adverse to it. And this portion is all contained in the stanza which begins, 'Thou art not slain.' And in order to be rightly understood this portion must fall into two divisions: for in the first part which begins 'Thou art not slain, &c.', the new thought takes up the last words and says of the soul, 'It is not true that thou art slain, but the cause wherefore thou seemest to be slain is a bewilderment into which thou like a coward hast been thrown by this lady who hath appeared.' And here it must be noted that, as Boethius says in his *Consolation*, every sudden change of things happens not without some commotion of the mind. And this is the meaning of the reproof spoken by this thought, which is called a young spirit of love, in order to make it under-

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stood that my consent inclined towards him. This can be understood more clearly and his victory recognized, when he now says, 'O soul of ours,' making himself out her familiar friend.

Afterwards, as has been said, he enjoins what this soul that he has reproved ought to do in order to approach this lady, and speaks to her thus : ' Behold how full of pity and how lowly she is.' These are two things which are the proper remedy for the passion of fear by which the soul appeared to be possessed, for they, especially when united, make men augur well of any person, and more especially piety which makes every other good quality radiant with its light. Wherefore Virgil, in speaking of Aeneas, attributes to him piety as his greatest praise ; and piety is not what the vulgar think, that is, it consists not in grieving over others' ills, but this is rather a particular effect of it which is called pity, and is a passion. But piety is not a passion ; it is rather a noble disposition of mind prepared to feel love, pity, and other charitable emotions.

Afterwards he says, behold also how she is ' Sage and courteous in her greatness.' Here he speaks of three things which among those that can be acquired by us, most of all make any person pleasing. He says ' sage '. Now what is more comely in a lady than to be sage. He says ' courteous '. Nothing in a lady becomes her better than courtesy. And let not the wretched crowd be deceived about this word also, who think that courtesy is naught but openhandedness, for openhandedness is a particular kind of courtesy and not courtesy at large. Courtesy is the same thing as propriety, and since in ancient times virtues and good manners were the fashion in courts, as nowadays just the contrary is the case, this word was taken from courts, and the word courtesy

meant the same as the custom of courts. And if this word were nowadays to be derived from courts, especially those of Italy, it would mean nothing but baseness. He says, 'In her greatness,' for the temporal greatness which is here intended is most of all becoming when accompanied with the two good qualities aforesaid, because it is that light by which the good or its opposite in any person is unmistakably shown. And how much of wisdom and how much of virtuous disposition escape notice for want of this light, and what madness and what vices are revealed by the presence of this light! Better would it be for those poor wretches in high estate who are mad, foolish, and depraved, to be in lowly condition, for then neither in this world nor after this life would they be in such ill repute. In truth it is of these that Solomon says in *Ecclesiastes*, 'There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.' Then subsequently he enjoins upon her, that is my soul, that 'she should call her henceforth her mistress', promising her that she shall be fully content with this, when she shall become acquainted with this Lady's adornment; and this he says here, 'For if thou deceivest not thyself thou shalt see.' Nor does he say aught else up to the end of this stanza. And here ends the literal meaning of all that I say in this Canzone when addressing these celestial Intelligences.

XII. Lastly, as the letter of this commentary stated above when it parted this Canzone into its principal divisions, I turn round with the face of my discourse towards the Canzone itself and address it: And in order that this division may be more fully understood, I say that generally it is called in each Canzone a *tornata*, because the poets who in former



times were wont to employ it did so in order that when the Canzone had been sung, they might turn back and address it with a certain part of the song. But I have seldom composed a *tornata* with this intention, and in order that others might perceive this, I have seldom introduced it into the scheme of the Canzone so as to make up the metre which is necessary for the measure, but I have introduced it when for the sake of ornament I desired to say something outside the import of the Canzone, as may be seen in this and in the rest.<sup>n</sup> And for this reason I say in the present instance that the goodness and the beauty of every discourse are separate and diverse from one another, for goodness resides in the meaning, and beauty in the adornment of the language, and both one and the other are attended with delight, although goodness be in the highest degree delightful. Wherefore, inasmuch as the goodness of this Canzone was difficult to apprehend on account of the diversity of persons who are introduced in it as speakers, so that many distinctions were needed, while its beauty was easily to be seen, this Canzone seemed to require that for people generally, attention should be fixed on its beauty rather than on its goodness. And this is what I say in this division.

But since it frequently happens that admonition appears presumptuous under certain circumstances, the orator is wont to address people indirectly, pointing his words not to him for whose sake he speaks but to some one else. And in truth this is the method observed here for the words are addressed to the Canzone but the meaning of them to the reader. I say therefore 'methinks, O Canzone, that rare shall be', that is, few shall be those who understand thee well. And I mention the cause, which is twofold; firstly, because 'wearisome' is thy speech (I say 'wearisome' for the

reason above mentioned), and secondly, because 'hard' is thy speech ('hard', I say, with reference to the novelty of its sentiment). Now in the next place I admonish her, and say, 'if by chance it come to pass that thou goest thither where there be some who seem to thee perplexed as to thy purport, be not dismayed, but say to them, "Since ye see not my goodness, at all events pay heed to my beauty."'" For I do not wish, as has been remarked above, to say here aught else but this, 'O ye who cannot perceive the meaning of this Canzone do not therefore reject her, but pay heed to her beauty, which is great both in construction of language which concerns the grammarian, and in the order of the discourse which pertains to the orator, and in the rhythm of its parts which pertains to the musician. All which things can meetly be perceived in her by him who looks closely. And this is the whole of the literal sense of the first Canzone which was signified above by the first course.

XIII. Since the literal meaning has been sufficiently shown we must now go on to the allegorical and true explanation. And therefore, to begin over again, I say that as the first delight of my soul, of which mention is made above, was destroyed I remained pierced with such sadness that no consolation availed me. However, since I could neither console myself, nor could others console me, after some time my mind, which was striving to be healed, be-thought itself to have recourse to a method which a certain disconsolate man had employed for his own consolation. And I set myself to read that book of Boethius, with which few are familiar, wherein when captive and exiled he had found solace. And hearing besides that Tully had written another book, in which when discoursing *On Friend-*

ship he had introduced words of consolation for Laelius, a most excellent man, on the death of his friend Scipio, I set myself to read that. And although it was hard for me at first to enter into their meaning, yet finally I entered into it, as far as the knowledge of Latin which I possessed, and such slight ability as I had enabled me to do, by which ability I already perceived many things as it were in a dream, as may be seen in the *New Life*.

And as it often happens that a man goes in quest of silver and succeeds beyond his intention in finding gold, which some hidden cause puts in his way, not perchance without the divine behest, so I who sought to console myself discovered not only a remedy for my tears, but also the words employed by authors and sciences and books ; and as I pondered on them I judged surely that Philosophy, who was mistress of these authors, these sciences, and these books, must be a most exalted thing. And I imagined her as made in the likeness of a gentle Lady ; and I could not think of her in actual shape as aught but compassionate, wherefore my sense did in truth gaze on her with such a will that I could hardly turn it away from her. And starting with this imagining I began to betake myself thither where she is truly demonstrated, that is, to the schools of the Religious, and to the disputations of the Philosophers ; so that in a short time, perhaps some thirty months, I began to have such a sense of her sweetness that love for her banished and destroyed every other thought. Wherefore, feeling myself raised up above the thought of my first love to the strength of this, I was, as it were, amazed and opened my lips with the language of the Canzone set forth above, showing my condition under the figure of other things ; because the rime of any vulgar tongue was not worthy to speak openly of the Lady of whom I was enamoured, nor

were my hearers so well prepared that they could so easily have apprehended words which had no feigned meaning ; nor would they have given their credence to the true meaning so easily as to that which was feigned, because in truth men fully believed that I was disposed for the latter love, but did not believe this of the former. I began, therefore, with saying, ‘ Ye who by thought move the third heaven.’

And since, as has been said, this lady was the Daughter of God, Queen of all things, most noble and beautiful Philosophy, we must now consider who were these movers and what was this third heaven. And first to speak of the third heaven in the order which has been already observed. And it is not here necessary to go on dividing and literally explaining ; for as the fictitious language is turned from that which it is in sound to that which it really signifies by the explanation I have already given, the meaning will become sufficiently clear.

XIV. In order to perceive what is meant by the ‘ Third Heaven ’ we must needs first see what I wish to express by this single word ‘ heaven ’, and afterwards we shall see how and why this third heaven was needful for us. I say that by ‘ heaven ’ I mean Science, and by ‘ heavens ’ the Sciences, because there are three points in which the heavens resemble the Sciences, above all, in their order and number, which they appear to have in common, as will be seen when we come to treat of that term ‘ third ’.

The first resemblance lies in the revolution of the one and of the other round about one point in itself that is immovable. For each movable heaven revolves about its centre, which is not moved by the motion of the heaven, and in like manner each Science moves round about its subject which the Science

does not move, because no Science demonstrates its own subject, but presupposes it.

The second point of resemblance is the diffusion of light by the one and by the other. For each of the heavens lights up things visible, and so every Science lights up things intelligible.

The third point of resemblance lies in the imparting of perfection to the things adapted for it. With regard to this imparting of perfection, so far as the first perfection, that is, the generation of the essence is concerned, all philosophers agree that the heavens are the cause, although they explain this in divers fashions, some referring it to the movers, as do Plato, Avicenna, and Algazel, some to the stars themselves, especially as regards the human soul, as do Socrates, and Plato also, and Dionysius the Academician; and others to celestial virtue, which is in the natural heat of the germ, as do Aristotle and the other Peripatetics. In the same way the Sciences are the causes which impart the second kind of perfection to us; and by the possession of the Sciences we are able to contemplate the Truth, which is our final perfection, as the Philosopher says in the sixth book of the *Ethics*, when he affirms that Truth is the good of the intellect. On account of these and many other points of resemblance, Science may be called 'Heaven'.

We must now see why the third heaven is so called. For this purpose we must give our consideration to a comparison which may be drawn between the order of the heavens and that of the Sciences. According then to the description given above, the seven heavens nearest to us are those of the planets; beyond and above these are two heavens in motion, and one above all the rest without motion. To the seven heavens nearest to us correspond the

seven Sciences of the *Trivium* and of the *Quadrivium*, that is to say, Grammar, Dialectic, Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Music, Geometry, and Astrology. To the eighth sphere, that is, the sphere of the stars, correspond Natural Science which is called Physics, and the Primary Science which is called Metaphysics; to the ninth sphere corresponds Moral Science, to the heaven which is at rest corresponds Divine Science, which is called Theology. And the reason why this should be so is briefly to be considered.

I say that the heaven of the Moon resembles Grammar because it may be compared with it. For if the Moon is carefully observed, there may be seen in it two things peculiar to it, which are not seen in the other stars; the one is the shadow in it, which is nothing else but rarity of its substance, upon which the rays of the sun cannot be brought to a stand and reflected back as in the other parts; the other is the variation in its brilliancy, which shines now on one side, now on the other, according as the sun looks upon it. And Grammar has these two properties, because on account of its infinitude the rays of the reason are not brought to a stand in any direction, especially in the case of words; and it shines now from this side, now from that, in so far as certain words, certain declensions, certain constructions are in use which formerly were not, and many formerly were in use which shall hereafter be in use again, as Horace says in the beginning of the *Poetry*, when he affirms that 'many words shall revive which formerly have lapsed, &c.'

And the heaven of Mercury may be compared to Dialectic on account of two properties, for Mercury is the smallest star in the sky, because the magnitude of its diameter is not more than two hundred and thirty-two miles, according to Alfraganus, who affirms that it is one twenty-eighth of

the diameter of the earth, which is six thousand, five hundred miles. The other property is that in its course the rays of the sun veil it more than any other star. And these two properties exist in Dialectic, for Dialectic is less in its substance than any other science, because it is perfectly summed up and brought within the limits of such a text as is contained in *Ars Vetus* and *Ars Nova* ; and it is more veiled in its course than any other science, inasmuch as it proceeds by sophistical and probable reasonings more than any other science.

And the heaven of Venus may be compared with Rhetoric on account of two properties ; one is the brilliancy of its aspect which is more pleasant to behold than that of any other star ; the other is its appearing at one time in the morning, at another time in the evening. And these two properties exist in Rhetoric, for Rhetoric is the pleasantest of all the Sciences, inasmuch as its chief aim is to please. It ‘appears in the morning’ when the rhetorician speaks directly of the surface view presented to his hearer ; it ‘appears in the evening’, that is, behind, when the rhetorician speaks of the letter by referring to that aspect of it which is remote from the hearer.

And the heaven of the Sun may be compared to Arithmetic on account of two properties ; the one is that all the other stars are informed with its light, the other is that the eye cannot gaze on it. And these two properties exist in Arithmetic because all the Sciences are illumined with its light, inasmuch as the subject matter of them all may be regarded in some way from the point of view of number, and in considering the subject matter we deal with it always by a numerical process. As, for example, in Natural Science a body in motion is the subject ; and this moving body implies the conception of continuity, and continuity implies

the conception of infinite number. And in Natural Science the foremost consideration of all is that of the principles of natural objects, which are three, namely, matter, limitation, and form, and in these this element of number is to be seen not only in all collectively, but also in each individually by him who very nicely considers them. For this reason Pythagoras, as Aristotle says in the first book of the *Metaphysics*, assumed that the even and the odd are the first principles of natural objects, reckoning that all things are number. The second property of the sun, moreover, is seen to exist in number which is the subject of Arithmetic, because the eye of the intellect cannot gaze at it, inasmuch as number considered in itself is infinite, and this we cannot apprehend.

And the heaven of Mars can be compared to Music on account of two properties. One of these is the perfect beauty of its relation to the rest; for in reckoning the moving heavens, with whichever we begin, whether with the lowest or with the highest, this same heaven of Mars comes fifth. It is the midmost of them all, that is, it is midway between the two first, the two second, the two third, and the two fourth. Its second property is that this same Mars dries up and burns everything because its heat is like that of fire; this heat is the reason why he appears suffused with the colour of fire, sometimes more, sometimes less, according to the density or rarity of the vapours which attend him, which often catch fire of themselves as is proved in the first book of the *Meteorics*. Hence Albumassar says that the ignition of these vapours portends the death of kings and the transfer of kingdoms, since they are effects of the lordship of Mars. Accordingly Seneca says that at the death of the Emperor Augustus he saw a ball of fire on



high. And in Florence, at the beginning of her downfall, there was seen in the form of a cross a great quantity of these vapours which accompany the star of Mars. And these two properties exist in Music, which is wholly dependent on relation, as is seen in words arranged in harmony and in songs; and the harmony resulting from these is the sweeter in proportion to the beauty of the relation, which in that Science is especially beautiful; because this is its principal aim. Moreover, Music draws to itself the human spirits which are, as it were, mainly vapours of the heart, so that they almost cease from any action of their own, so undivided is the soul when it listens to Music; and the virtue of all the spirits is, as it were, concentrated in the spirit of sense which receives the sound.

And the heaven of Jupiter may be compared to Geometry on account of two properties; the first is that it moves between two heavens which are antagonistic to its excellent temperateness, that is to say, the heaven of Mars and that of Saturn. Wherefore Ptolemy says in the book above cited that Jupiter is a star of temperate constitution, midway between the coldness of Saturn and the heat of Mars. The second property is that it shows white among the rest of the stars as if silvered over. And these properties exist in the Science of Geometry. Geometry moves between two things antagonistic to it, as moving between the point and the circle:—and I apply the term circle in a wide sense to everything round, whether spherical or plane:—for, as Euclid says, the point is the beginning of Geometry, and, as he affirms, a circle is the most perfect figure in that Science, and must needs therefore be conceived as an end. So that Geometry moves between the point and the circle as between its beginning and its end. And these two things are

antagonistic to its certainty, for a point does not admit of being measured because it is indivisible, and it is impossible to square a circle perfectly, because it is curved and therefore cannot be exactly measured. And, moreover, Geometry is most white, in so far as it is without stain of error, and is most certain in itself, and in its handmaid who is called Perspective.

And the heaven of Saturn has two properties whereby it may be compared with Astrology: one is the slowness of its movement among the twelve signs, for, according to the writings of the astrologers, it requires twenty-nine years and more to complete its revolution; the other is that it is high above all the other planets. And these two properties exist in Astrology, for in completing its circle, that is to say, in the learning of this Science, a very long space of time is wanted, both on account of its demonstrations which are more numerous than in any of the above-mentioned Sciences, and on account of the experience which is required for forming a right judgement on it. And, moreover, it is far higher than any of the others, because, as Aristotle says in the beginning of the book *On the Soul*, Science is lofty in respect of nobility both on account of the nobleness of its subject and on account of its certainty. And Astrology is more noble and more lofty than any of the Sciences above mentioned on account of the nobleness and loftiness of its subject, which is concerned with the movement of the heavens; it is also lofty and noble on account of its certainty which is free from all defect, as being derived from the most perfect and the best ordered first principle. And if any one supposes that there is any flaw in it, this is not due to the Science but, as Ptolemy says, arises from our carelessness, and must be imputed to that.

XV. After drawing these comparisons with the first seven heavens, we must now go on to the remainder which are three in number, as has several times been stated. I say that the starry heaven may be compared with Physics on account of three properties, and with Metaphysics on account of three more, for it reveals to us visibly two things pertaining to itself, namely, the multitude of stars and the Galaxy, that is, the white circle, which is commonly called St. James's Way ; and it displays to us one of its poles, and the other it keeps hidden from us ; and it displays to us one movement only, that from East to West, and another movement which it makes from West to East it keeps almost hidden from us. Wherefore, proceeding in order we must first consider its resemblance to Physics, and afterwards its resemblance to Metaphysics.

I say that the starry heaven displays a multitude of stars to us ; for as the Wise Men of Egypt have perceived, including the last star which appears to them in the south, they reckon one thousand and twenty-two starry bodies, of which I am now speaking. And this constitutes the closest resemblance between this heaven and Physics, if these three numbers, that is two, twenty, and a thousand are regarded with due exactness. For the number two stands for movement in space, which necessarily is from one point to another ; and by the number twenty is signified the movement of permutation : for inasmuch as we cannot go onward from the number ten, except by the permutation of this number ten by means of the other nine or of itself, and the finest permutation which it undergoes is its permutation by means of itself, and the first which it thus undergoes is twenty, the movement above mentioned is properly signified by this number. And by the number one thousand is signified the

movement of increase, for this term, namely, one thousand, denotes the largest number expressed in a single word, and there can be no further increase except by multiplying this number. And Physics alone exhibit these three movements, as is proved in the fifth book of the first of the physical treatises.

And in the Galaxy this heaven has a close resemblance to Metaphysics. Wherefore it must be known that the Philosophers have had different opinions about this Galaxy. For the Pythagoreans affirmed that the sun at one time wandered in its course, and in passing through other regions not suited to sustain its heat set on fire the place through which it passed, and so these traces of the conflagration remain there. And I believe that they were influenced by the fable of Phaeton, which Ovid tells at the beginning of the second book of the *Metamorphoses*. Others, as, for instance, Anaxagoras and Democritus, said that the Galaxy was the light of the sun reflected in that region. And these opinions they confirmed by demonstrative reasons. What Aristotle may have said about it cannot be accurately known, because the two translations give different accounts of his opinion. And I think that any mistake may have been due to the translators, for in the New Translation he is made to say that the Galaxy is a congregation, under the stars of this part of the heaven, of the vapours which are always being attracted by them, and this opinion does not appear to be right. In the Old Translation, he says that the Galaxy is nothing but a multitude of fixed stars in that region, stars so small that they are not separately visible from our earth, but the appearance of whiteness which we call the Galaxy is due to them. And it may be that the heaven in that part is more dense, and therefore retains and reproduces that

light ; and this opinion Avicenna and Ptolemy appear to share with Aristotle. Therefore, since the Galaxy is an effect of those stars which cannot be perceived except so far as we apprehend these things by their effect, and since Metaphysics treat of primal substances which in the same way we cannot apprehend except by their effects, it is plain that there is a close resemblance between the starry heaven and Metaphysics.

Moreover, by the pole which we see, this heaven signifies sensible things, of which taken as a whole Physics treat ; and by the pole which we cannot see it signifies immaterial things which are not objects of sense, and of these Metaphysics treat ; wherefore the heaven aforesaid has a great resemblance to both of these Sciences. Moreover, by its two movements it signifies these two Sciences ; for by the movement with which it revolves every day, entering on a new rotation from one point to another, it signifies natural and corruptible things, which daily fulfil their course, and have their material changed from one form into another ; and of these things Physics treat. And by the almost insensible movement which it makes from West to East of one degree in a hundred years, it signifies incorruptible things, which in their beginning were created by God and shall have no end ; and of these Metaphysics treat. And therefore I say that this movement signifies these things, because that rotation had a beginning and should not have an end, because a rotation ends when it returns to the same point from which it began. But this heaven will not return to such a point so far as this movement is concerned. For since the beginning of the world little more than one sixth part of the rotation is completed, and we are now in the last age of the world, and in truth are awaiting the consummation

of the heavenly movement. And thus it is plain that by reason of many properties the starry heaven can be compared to Physics and Metaphysics.

The Crystalline heaven which has been reckoned above as the *primum mobile* may plainly enough be compared with Moral Philosophy, for Moral Philosophy, as Thomas says in commenting on the second book of the *Ethics*, disposes us for the rest of the Sciences. For, as says the Philosopher in the fifth book of the *Ethics*, legal justice disposes the Sciences for our learning, and in order that they may not be forsaken, commands that they should be learnt and taught. So the aforesaid heaven orders with its movement the daily revolution of all the rest, by which here below they daily receive the virtue of all their parts. For if the revolution of the former heaven did not order this, little of their virtue would come to us, and little would be seen of them here below. Wherefore we assume that, supposing it were possible for this Ninth heaven to be without motion, the third part of the heavens would not yet have been seen from any spot on the earth, and Saturn would be hidden for fourteen years and a half from every spot on the earth, and Jupiter would be hidden for six years, and Mars for almost a year, and the Sun for one hundred and eighty-two days and fourteen hours (I say 'days', meaning the time which is measured by that number of days), and Venus and Mercury would be hidden or seen almost in the same way as the Sun, and the Moon would remain hidden from all mankind for a space of fourteen days and a half. In truth there would be no generation here below nor life of animals and plants; there would be no night nor day, nor week nor month nor year, but the whole universe would be disordered, and the movement of the other heavens would be fruitless. And

just in the same way, if Moral Philosophy were to disappear, the other Sciences would be hidden for some time, and there would be no generation nor life of happiness; and in vain would the Sciences have been recorded or discovered of old. Wherefore it is plain enough that this heaven admits of comparison with Moral Philosophy.

Again, the Empyrean heaven in its peace resembles the divine Science which is full of all peace, and does not admit of any strife of opinion or sophistical argument on account of the supreme certainty of its subject, which is God. And of this He says to His disciples, 'My peace I give to you, my peace I leave to you,' when giving and leaving to them His doctrine, which is this Science of which I speak. Of her Solomon says, 'There are three-score queens, and four-score concubines, and young handmaidens without number: my dove, my perfect one is one.' He calls all the Sciences queens and concubines and handmaids, and this he calls a dove because it is without stain and strife; this too he calls perfect, because it makes us perfectly to behold the truth wherein our soul has rest. And therefore since we have thus discoursed of the comparison between the Heavens and the Sciences, it can be seen that by the third heaven I mean Rhetoric, which bears a likeness to the third heaven as appears above.

xvi. By the resemblances on which I have discoursed it may be perceived who are these movers to whom I speak that are the movers of this heaven, such, for example, as Boethius and Tully who with the sweetness of their discourse ushered me, as has been said above, into the path of love, that is, into the pursuit of this most gentle lady Philosophy, by the rays of their star, that is, by their writing about her;

whence in every Science the writings are a star full of light which demonstrates that Science. And now that this truth has been made plain, the true meaning of the first stanza of the Canzone prefixed may be perceived by means of the fictitious and of the literal explanation. And by this same explanation the second stanza may be sufficiently understood as far as that part where he says, 'He maketh me to look upon a lady.' Here it should be known that this lady is Philosophy, who truly is a lady full of sweetness, adorned with virtue, wonderful in knowledge, glorious in freedom, as will become plain in the third Tractate, which will treat of her nobility.

And in the passage where the Canzone says, 'Let him who would see his salvation take care to gaze into the eyes of this lady,' the eyes of this lady are her demonstrations, which when directed into the eyes of the intellect fill with love a soul that is free in her conditions. O most sweet and ineffable traits, ye who on a sudden steal away the human mind and are seen in the demonstrations within the eyes of Philosophy when she discourses to her lovers! Truly in you is salvation, by which he who beholds you is made blessed and saved from the death of ignorance and vice.

Where it is said 'If he fear not anguish of sighs' this is the meaning, namely, if he fear not labour of study and strife of doubts which rise innumerable from the looks of this lady as their source, and afterwards, as her light keeps shining, fall like morning mists before the face of the sun, while the intellect become familiar with her, remains free and full of certainty, just as the air is purged and lighted up by the midday rays.

The third stanza also is understood by means of the literal explanation up to the place where it says 'My soul weepeth'. Here we should carefully attend to a certain moral



which may be noted in these words, namely, that a man ought not on account of a greater friend to forget the services rendered by one of less esteem ; but, if indeed he must needs follow the one and forsake the other, the better is to be followed while quitting the other with some seemly lamentation, whereby he gives reason for the one whom he follows to love him more.

Afterwards, where he says ‘ Of mine eyes ’ he means to say naught else than that fateful was the hour when the first proof of this lady entered the eyes of my intellect, which was the immediate cause why I was thus enamoured. And there where he says ‘ All my peers ’, he means the souls that are free from wretched and vile delights, and from vulgar ways, being endowed with genius and with memory. And he says afterwards ‘ slayeth ’, and after that ‘ I am slain ’, which appears to contradict what has been said above of the salvation wrought by this lady. Therefore we must know that one part of the soul speaks here, and the other part there ; and these two parts contend in strife, as has been made clear above. Hence it is no wonder if there she says ‘ Yes ’, and here she says ‘ No ’, provided we mark well which part it is that descends and which that ascends.

Afterwards, in the fourth stanza, where it says, ‘ A young spirit of love,’ this must be understood of a thought which springs from my devotion. Wherefore it should be known that by ‘ love ’ in this allegory is always understood that devotion which is the application of the mind that is enamoured of anything to that thing. Afterwards when he says ‘ Thou shalt behold adornment of such lofty miracles ’, he announces that by her means the adornment of those marvels shall be seen ; and he speaks truly, for the adornment of those miracles is the sight of their causes which she demonstrates, as the Philo-

sopher appears to hold at the beginning of the *Metaphysics* when he says that men through beholding this adornment began to be enamoured of this Lady. And of this word 'miracle' we shall speak more fully in the next Tractate. All the rest of this Canzone that follows is sufficiently clear from the preceding explanation. And thus, at the end of this second Tractate, I say and affirm that the Lady of whom I was enamoured after the first love was the fairest and most honourable Daughter of the Emperor of the Universe, on whom Pythagoras conferred the name of Philosophy. And this is the end of the second Tractate, which is set on as the first course.

# THIRD TRACTATE

## SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

*Canzone.* This Canzone, as the poet says in his commentary, has three main divisions. The first is contained in the first stanza, or preface, which is subdivided into three parts. In the first of these he touches on the ineffable nature of his theme : in the second he speaks of his inability to deal with it : in the third he excuses himself for his inability. The second main division includes the second, third, and fourth stanzas which recount the praises of the Lady. This also is subdivided into three parts. In the first part, or second stanza, the poet extols his mistress as a whole, both soul and body : in the second part, or third stanza, he praises her soul : in the third part, or fourth stanza, he praises her body. The third main division consists of the fifth stanza, in which he addresses his Canzone. This *Tornata* shows how the lady, who was formerly called humble, may now be termed cruel and disdainful because she baffled the poet's eyes which could not endure to gaze on her brightness.

## COMMENTARY

(I) The poet, as was stated in the last Tractate, became absorbed in his passion, and was impelled to give expression to it by three reasons, viz. the desire of gaining honour for himself through his friendship for the Lady, the desire that this friendship should be lasting, and the wish to avoid reproach by stating who the Lady was. (II) He begins to explain the first division of the Canzone, and defines Love as the spiritual union of the soul with the object loved. All things have some affinity with God as the cause of their

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form, but the human soul has most affinity with Him, and so has love for the being on whom God has bestowed His choicest gifts. The place in which Love discourses is the mind or thinking faculty, which is the highest of the three faculties of the soul. Mind belongs only to man and to divine substances. (III) Man, though his essence be one, can feel all the love which is felt by various bodies, simple, compound, plants, and animals, and is here described. The love of which the poet speaks is the highest of all. He cannot fully either apprehend or express it. (IV) He further explains this incapacity of mind and speech, and shows that he is not blameable for them, as blame is due to want of will, not to want of power. (V) He then goes on to the second division, beginning with the second stanza in praise of the Lady as a whole, and enters into a long digression explaining and illustrating the revolution of the Sun round the Earth. (VI) After another digression on the meaning of 'hour' both temporal and equal, he shows that the Intelligences on high gaze on his Lady, as a thought existing in the divine mind. God Himself loves her because He has infused into her more of His own nature, and man admires her because her soul dignifies the body which is its actuality. (VII) He then praises the Lady in her soul. The goodness of God is diffused over all things, but enters into various substances, as light does, in proportion to their receptivity. In the intellectual order there are infinite gradations, and there is some human being little below the angels. Such is this Lady. Her speech and acts are an example to others, and her excellence is useful to other ladies, and aids the faith of all mankind. (VIII) He praises the Lady with regard to the body, especially those parts in which the soul chiefly operates, the eyes and the mouth. The various expressions in the fourth stanza are further explained; innate are distinguished from habitual vices; and the end and source of this beauty are defined. (IX) He then proceeds to the third division of the Canzone, and shows why the Lady who is now called humble was formerly called proud and disdainful. An illustration is drawn from the

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sky which always has the quality of brightness, but does not always appear bright; and his theory of vision is stated. (X) After this digression he explains how his feeling towards the Lady proceeded from excessive desire, and adds reason for showing deference in bestowing praise and giving advice. (XI) The poet now passes from the literal to the allegorical meaning of the Canzone, and before speaking of Philosophy, which is signified by the Lady, explains the origin of this term, and the nature of friendship. The name 'philosopher' was first assumed by Pythagoras who would not arrogate to himself the epithet 'wise' previously applied to the Seven Sages. The title philosopher, i.e. lover of wisdom, is given to those who have a special love for it. Love is bestowed for various reasons but the highest love is bestowed for the sake of worth. Men should be loved for their worth; Wisdom or philosophy for the sake of truth. The contemplation of Truth is the highest happiness. The name philosophy is given to the Sciences, but specially to natural, and moral, and metaphysical Science, and most of all to the last. (XII) In proceeding with the allegorical explanation of the second stanza he gives reasons why the Sun is worthy to be a type of God. As the Sun illuminates first himself and then all other sensible objects, so God illumines first Himself and then all other intellectual beings. Badness in things which partake of light, sensible or intellectual, is accidental, as in bad angels. Philosophy is part of the divine essence. (XIII) She is also in created Intelligences, but only in those which are good. Her highest gifts can be enjoyed only in use, not merely in possession, though the man who only possesses her is still a philosopher, for philosophy is always transcendent in her perfection. (XIV) As in the literal, so in the allegorical explanation we go on from the general to the particular praises. The various expressions in the third stanza are interpreted; different terms expressive of light are defined, and the effect of philosophy on the soul is described, especially in helping our faith. (XV) He then proceeds to the fourth stanza, explaining the eyes of Philo-

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sophy as her demonstrations, and her smile as her persuasions. The difficulty of understanding her obliges us sometimes to be content with negations ; but the desire of wisdom is not futile in man or angels, because it is always proportionate to their nature. The beauty of Wisdom here mentioned signifies the moral virtues which are injured by vanity and pride. Hence she teaches humility. Her highest praise is the knowledge of first principles. This knowledge made Wisdom the partner of God in the Creation of the world. The poet calls her cruel and disdainful, because at first he could not understand her persuasions (namely, the moral virtues) ; or look into her eyes (i.e. the demonstrations of the highest Philosophy).

# THIRD TRACTATE

## SECOND CANZONE

*Amor, che nella mente mi ragiona . . .*

LOVE, who in my mind discourseth to me of my Lady with fond desire, oft-times stirreth such thoughts of her within me that the intellect brooding thereon doth go astray. His speech so sweetly soundeth that the soul which doth hear and feel it saith, 'Ah me, that I have no power to tell what I hear about my Lady!' And in sooth 'tis meet that I should first dismiss (if I would treat of that which I do hear of her), aught that my intellect doth not apprehend, and of that which is understood great part, because I should not know how to say it. Therefore, if there shall be defect in my rimes which shall embark upon the praises of that Lady, let the blame thereof rest on the weakness of our understanding, and on our speech which hath not strength to report all that Love hath to say.

The sun who circleth round all the world ne'er beholdeth aught so gentle as in that hour when he shineth on the region where dwelleth the lady, of whom Love constraineth me to speak. Every Intelligence on high gazeth on her, and the folk who on earth are enamoured of her, in their thoughts still find her when Love bringeth feelings of her peace. Her being so greatly pleaseth Him who bestoweth it on her that He always infuseth into her of His virtue more abundantly than our nature doth demand. Her pure soul which receiveth this salvation from Him doth make Him manifest in that which she bringeth with her,<sup>u</sup> for her beauties are things visible, and the eyes of those on whom

she shineth send messages thereof to the heart fraught with desires, which come abroad and turn to sighs.

Into her descendeth virtue divine, as it doth into an angel who beholdeth Him : and let any gentle lady who believeth not this go with her and behold her acts. Here where she doth speak there cometh down a spirit from heaven, who inspireth belief that the lofty worth which she owneth is beyond that which is allotted to us. Those suave acts which she showeth to the world, each rivalling the other, go calling on Love in such tones as constrain him to give ear. Of her it may be said that gentle in every lady is all that in her is found, and beautiful in proportion as it resembleth her. And it may be averred that her aspect helpeth that which seemeth marvellous to gain assent ; whereby our faith is aided. Therefore was she from eternity so ordained.

Things in her aspect appear, which reveal to us some of the joys of Paradise, in her eyes I say and in her sweet smile : things which love doth summon thither as to their own place. By them is our intellect surpassed, as weak sight by the sun's ray : and as I cannot gaze fixedly on them I must needs be content to say little concerning them. Her beauty raineth down flakes of fire ensouled by a gentle spirit who is the creator of every good thought. Like a thunderbolt they shatter the inborn vices which make man vile. Therefore let every lady who heareth her beauty blamed for not seeming peaceful and lowly gaze upon her who is the pattern of humility. This is she who maketh humble all the self-willed : she was the thought of Him who set the Universe in motion.

O Canzone, it seemeth that thy speech is contrary to the words of a little sister of thine, for this lady whom thou dost



make so lowly she calleth fierce and disdainful. Thou knowest that the heaven is ever bright and shining, and in itself is never troubled, but our eyes for reason enough sometimes call the sun dark. So when my song calleth her proud, it regardeth her not as she truly is, but only as she appeareth to my lay. For my soul was fearful, and still feareth so that all things seem fierce, whenever I look there where she taketh heed of me. Thus make thine excuse, if thou needs must, and, when thou canst, present thyself to her and say, My Lady, if it pleaseth thee, of thee in all quarters will I speak.

I. Thus my second love, as has been told in the last Tractate, had its beginning in the compassionate mien of a lady. This love, afterwards finding my life susceptible of his heat, blazed up, as fire doth, from a spark into a great flame, so that not only in sleep but in waking hours light from this lady was conveyed to my brain. And how great was the desire to behold her with which love inspired me can neither be told nor apprehended. And not only of her was I thus desirous, but of all those persons who were in any way near to her either through intimacy or some relationship. Oh how many nights there were when the eyes of all others were closed and laid to rest in sleep while mine gazed fixedly at the abode of my love! And just as a fire when it has gathered volume will needs show itself without, for remain hidden it cannot, so there came over me a wish to speak of love which could not wholly be repressed. And although I had little power to effect my purpose, yet, through love's will or my own wholeheartedness, I approached nearer to it oft-times in so far as I reflected and perceived that, in speaking of love, no fairer

nor more profitable discourse could be held than that which extolled the person who was loved.

And three reasons disposed me to this conclusion. One of these was my own love for myself which is the source of all other love, as every one sees that there is no more legitimate or refined method of doing honour to one's self than by honouring a friend. For inasmuch as no friendship can exist except where there is likeness, wherever friendship is seen likeness is inferred, and wherever likeness is inferred praise and blame are meted out in common. And from this reasoning two great lessons can be learned: one is that we should not wish any vicious person to show himself our friend, because in this case no good opinion is formed of him to whom such a person shows himself a friend: the second is that no one ought to blame any friend of his in public, because he thus thrusts a finger into his own eye if the foregoing reasoning is carefully considered.

The second reason was the desire that this friendship should be lasting. Wherefore it should be known that, as the Philosopher says in the ninth book of the *Ethics*, where there is friendship between persons unequal in rank there must needs, if it is to be preserved, be a certain ratio between them, which as it were reduces the unlikeness to likeness, as in the relation between master and servant. For although a servant when he receives a kindness from his master cannot repay him with a similar kindness, yet he ought to repay him as best he can, with so much solicitude and frankness that that which in itself is unlike becomes like through the display of goodwill, by which friendship is manifested and strengthened and preserved. Therefore I, reflecting that I am inferior to this lady and perceiving the benefits I owe to her, have undertaken to extol her according

to the measure of my capacity, which, although it is not in itself like hers, yet shows my ready will to do more if more I could do, and so becomes like to the capacity of this gentle lady.

The third reason is an argument inspired by foresight; for, as Boethius says, 'it is not enough to look only at that which is before the eyes, namely, the present; and therefore foresight is given to us which looks beyond to that which may happen in the future.' I say that I reflected on a reproach which many who shall come after may cast on me for fickleness of mind, when they hear that I changed from my first love. Wherefore in order to obviate this reproach no better argument could be found than by saying who that lady was that had wrought this change in me. For through her manifest pre-eminence we may form some notion of her efficacy; and when the surpassing greatness of her efficacy is understood, it may be considered that all stability of mind is liable to change when matched against this, and therefore that I am not to be judged fickle and unstable. I undertook, therefore, to praise this lady and, if not as much as might befit her, at least to go as far as I could, and I began with saying, 'Love who in my mind discourseth to me.'

This Canzone has three main divisions: the first consists of the whole of the first stanza in which I speak by way of preface: the second consists of all the three following stanzas which explain what it is intended to express, that is, the praise of this gentle lady. And the first of these begins 'The sun who circleth round all the world ne'er beholdeth'. The third division consists of the fifth and last stanza in which by directing my speech to the Canzone I clear it of a certain objection. I must now discourse of these three divisions in turn.

II. Beginning, therefore, with the first portion, which was composed as a preface to this Canzone, I say that it is meet to divide it into three parts. For, firstly, it touches on the ineffable nature of this theme : secondly, it tells of my incompetence to handle it perfectly ; and this second part begins, ‘And in sooth ’tis meet that I should first dismiss.’ Lastly, I excuse myself for this incompetence, the blame for which ought not to be thrown on me ; and this I begin to do by saying, ‘Therefore if there shall be defect in my rimes.’

I proceed, therefore, ‘Love who in my mind discourseth to me,’ where it is specially to be noted who it is that thus discourses, and what is this place in which I say that he discourses. Love, if we truly apprehend and nicely consider, is nothing else than the spiritual union of the soul with the object loved, to which union the soul of its own nature hastens quicker or slower according as it is free or obstructed. And the reason of this natural tendency may be this: every substantial form proceeds from its first cause, namely, God, as is written in the treatise *Of Causes*, and these forms do not obtain their differentiae from the first cause which is most simple, but from secondary causes, and from the subject matter into which the form descends. Hence in the same book it is written when treating of the infusion of the divine goodness, ‘And they make the excellences and gifts diverse by the co-operation of the subject which receives them.’ Wherefore inasmuch as every effect retains something of the nature of its cause (as Alpetragius says when he affirms that whatever is caused by a circular body has to some extent circular being), so each form has to some extent the being of the divine nature, not that the divine nature is divided and imparted to these, but that it

is shared by them somewhat in the same way as the nature of the sun is shared by the other stars. And the nobler the form, the more of this nature it contains. Wherefore the human soul, which is the noblest of all the forms that are generated beneath the heaven, receives more of the divine nature than is imparted to any other form. And since in God the will to exist is most accordant with His nature, because, as we read in the book just cited, 'Being is the first thing, and before this there is naught,' the soul of man naturally desires with boundless longing to have being. And since its being depends on God and is preserved by Him, it naturally wills and desires to be united with God for the strengthening of its being. And since in the excellences of Nature the constitution of the divine nature is revealed, the human soul naturally unites herself in spiritual fashion with these gifts more speedily and more closely in proportion as they appear to be more perfect.<sup>n</sup> And this appearance is vouchsafed according as the recognition of them in the soul is clear or obstructed. And this union is what we call love, by help of which we can know what is within the soul by seeing outside her those whom she loves. This love, that is, the union of my soul with this gentle lady in whom abundance of the divine light showed itself to me, is he that discourses, of whom I speak; since from love thoughts were continually arising which gaze and ponder on the worth of this lady who spiritually was made one with my soul.

The place in which I affirm that this love discourses is the mind, but in saying that it is the mind no clearer understanding is gained than before. We must, therefore, see what this word 'the mind' properly signifies. I say, therefore, that the Philosopher in the second book *On the Soul*,

when making a division of her faculties, says that the soul has three chief faculties, namely, life, feeling, and reason; and he also adds motion, but this may be considered one with feeling, since every soul which feels, whether with all its senses or with one alone, is in motion, so that motion is a faculty involved in feeling. And, as he says, it is abundantly clear that these faculties are interdependent in such a way that the one is the basis of the other. And that which is a basis can be regarded separately in itself, but the other which is based upon it cannot be regarded separately from its basis. Therefore the vegetative faculty by which life is maintained is a basis on which feeling rests, that is sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch, and this vegetative faculty by itself can be a soul as we see in the case of all plants. The sensitive faculty cannot exist without the vegetative: there cannot be found anything that has feeling apart from life. And this sensitive faculty is the basis of the intellectual, that is, of the reason, and therefore in mortal things that have a soul the rational faculty cannot be found without the sensitive: but the sensitive can be found without the rational, as we see in beasts and birds and fish and all dumb animals. And that soul which combines all these faculties is far the most perfect of all. And the soul of man which is endowed with the nobility of the highest faculty, namely, reason, participates in the divine nature under the aspect of everlasting intelligence. For the soul in this supreme faculty is so much ennobled and so completely divested of matter that the divine light streams into it as into an angel, and hence man is called by philosophers a divine animal.\* In this noblest part of the soul are various abilities, as the Philosopher affirms, especially in the third book *Of the Soul*, where he says that there is

in it one ability which is called scientific, and another which is called ratiocinative or deliberative, and attendant on these are certain other abilities, as Aristotle affirms in that same passage, as, for example, those of imagination and judgement. And all these noblest abilities, and all others which are contained in this excellent faculty are called collectively by this name the meaning of which we desired to know, that is, 'mind.' It is, therefore, manifest that by 'mind' is meant that highest and most excellent part of the soul.

And that this was the meaning is evident, for this term 'mind' is predicated only of man and of divine substances, as may be clearly perceived by the help of Boethius, who first predicates it of men when he says to Philosophy, 'Thou and God who sent thee into the mind of men.' Afterwards he predicates it of God when he says to God, 'Thou bringest forth all things after the pattern in the heavens, Thou most fair who bearest the fair world in Thy mind.' Nor was it ever predicated of dumb animals; nay, it does not appear possible or proper to predicate it of many men who seem wanting in this most perfect part; and, therefore, such persons are called in Latin *amentes* and *dementes*, that is, without mind. Wherefore we can now see what is mind, which is that end and the most precious part of the soul, namely, deity. And this is the place in which I say that love discourseth to me of my Lady.

III. Not without good cause do I say that this love carries on his work 'in my mind'; but this is affirmed with reason in order that we may apprehend what is this love by means of the place in which it performs its task. Wherefore we must know, as has been said above, for the

reason there shown, that everything has its own special love ; as, for instance, simple bodies have in themselves a love inspired by nature for their own proper place, and therefore earth always tends downwards to the centre : fire has a natural love for the circumference above, adjoining the heaven of the moon, and therefore always leaps up towards that.

The primary composite bodies, such as minerals, have a love for the place which is adapted for their generation, and grow in that and derive strength and potency from that. Hence we see that the loadstone always receives its virtue from the quarter where it was generated.

Plants, which are the primary objects endowed with soul, still more evidently have a love for a certain place in accordance with the requirements of their constitution ; and therefore we see that certain plants almost always do well by the water, certain others on the ridges of the mountains, certain others on the shores or at the foot of the mountains, which if they are transplanted either die altogether or live as it were sadly, like things detached from the place they love.

Dumb animals not only more plainly have a love for their place, but we see that they also have a love for one another.

Mankind have their own proper love for all perfect and noble things. And since man, although his whole form consists of one substance alone, has on account of his nobility a portion of the nature of every one of these things in himself, he can feel all these loves and does feel them all.

For by reason of the nature of simple body which has lordship over his material part, he naturally loves to sink downwards : therefore, when he moves his body upwards he is the more fatigued.

By reason of the second nature, that of mixed body, he



loves the place of his generation and also the season. Hence every one is naturally of more vigorous body in the place where he was brought forth, and in the season of his generation than in any other. Wherefore we read in the stories of Hercules both in the *Greater Ovid* and in Lucan and in other poets, that when the hero was fighting with the giant Antaeus, every time that the giant was weary and laid his body prostrate on the ground, whether of his own accord or because Hercules threw him, force and strength unimpaired rose again into him from the ground in which and from which he had been generated. Hercules perceiving this at last took hold of him, and clasping him tight and uplifting him from the ground held him without letting him come in contact with the earth, until by superior strength he conquered and slew him. And this combat took place in Africa as these writings testify.

And by the third nature, namely, that of plants, man has an affection for certain food, not because it acts on the senses but because it is nutritious, and the food for which he has an affection renders the operation of that third nature most perfect, while food of other kinds does not, but renders it imperfect. And therefore we see that certain food makes men shapely and large-limbed and of a good healthy colour, and that certain other food produces an effect the contrary of this.

And by the fourth nature, that of animals, I mean the sensitive nature, man has a different affection by which he feels love according to sensible appearances like the animals, and this love in man most of all has need of control on account of its excessive activity, chiefly in the pleasures of taste and of touch.

And by reason of the fifth and last nature, that is, the truly human or, to use a better word, angelic, that is, rational,

man has an affection for truth and virtue ; and from this affection springs true and perfect friendship, derived from what is honourable ; and of this the Philosopher speaks in the eighth book of the *Ethics* when he treats of friendship.

Therefore, inasmuch as this nature is called mind, as has been shown above, I said that ‘ Love discourseth in my mind ’ in order to make it understood that this affection, namely, for truth and virtue, is born in that noblest nature, and in order to shut out any false opinion as to myself by which it might have been suspected that my love was for the delights of sense. I say afterwards ‘ with fond desire ’, in order to call attention to its continuance and its fervour. And I say that this affection ‘ oft-times stirreth such thoughts that the intellect doth go astray ’, and this I say with truth, because my thoughts, in discoursing of her, many times wished to infer things about her, though I could not understand them ; and I was so bewildered that to outward view I almost appeared beside myself, like a man who, as he gazes fixedly along a line straight before him, first sees the things nearest him quite clearly ; afterwards as he looks further sees objects less clearly ; afterwards going further on becomes dazed ; last of all, as he goes on to the furthest point, loses continuity of vision and sees nothing.

This is one ineffable aspect of the subject which I have taken as my theme. And subsequently I speak of the other when I say ‘ His speech, &c.’ And I say that my thoughts (which are the speech of love) sound sweetly, so that my soul, that is, my affections, longs to be able to utter this speech with my tongue, and because I cannot utter it, I say that the soul laments over this in the words ‘ Ah me, that I have no power ’.

And this is the other ineffable aspect ; namely, that the

tongue cannot completely follow that which the intellect sees, and I say, 'The soul which doth hear and feel it': 'hear' referring to the words, and 'feeling' referring to the sweetness of their sound.

IV. Having discoursed on two ineffable aspects of this matter, I must needs go on to discourse on the words which tell of my incompetence. I say, therefore, that my incompetence has a twofold source, just as the loftiness of my lady has a twofold transcendence after the fashion already described.

For on account of the poverty of my intellect I must needs omit much of the truth concerning her which radiates as it were into my mind and is received into it as into a transparent body without being arrested by it. And this I affirm in the following clause, 'And in sooth 'tis meet that I should first dismiss.'

Afterwards, when I say 'And of that which is understood', I affirm that I am incompetent not merely for that for which the intellect is too weak, but even for that which I understand, since my tongue has not such eloquence as to be able to express that which is discoursed about it in my thought. Wherefore it may be seen that in comparison with the truth, what I shall say is but little, and if the matter be rightly considered, this redounds to the great praise of this lady at which I chiefly aim. And it may be said that this speech which at every point lends a hand to my chief aim comes indeed from the workshop of the rhetorician.

Afterwards, when my Canzōne says 'Therefore if there shall be defect in my rimes', I excuse myself for my fault, for which I ought not to be blamed when others see that

my words are inadequate to the dignity of this lady. And I affirm that if there be defect 'in my rimes', that is, in my words which are intended to treat of her, the blame for that is to be laid on the weakness of the understanding and the inadequacy of our speech, which is overpowered by the thought so that it cannot entirely overtake it, most of all where the thought springs from love, because here the soul is more deeply stirred than at other times.

Somebody might say, 'thou art accusing and excusing thyself in the same breath,' since it is a proof and not a palliation of a fault when the blame is laid at the door of the intellect and of the mode of speech which is my own ; for certainly, if my speech be good, I ought to be praised for that so far as it is so, and if it be faulty I ought to be blamed. To this it may be briefly answered that in very truth I am not accusing but excusing myself. And in proof of this it should be known that, according to the opinion of the Philosopher in the third book of the *Ethics*, a man is deserving of praise or of blame only in those things which it is in his own power to do, or to leave undone ; but in those things in which he has no such power he deserves neither blame nor praise, because both of these ought to be awarded to some one else, although the things praised or blamed be part of the man himself. Wherefore we ought not to abuse a man because his body is ugly from his birth, since it was not in his power to make himself beautiful ; but we ought to blame the faulty adjustment of the matter of which his body was made, which was the source of the fault of nature. So too we ought not to praise a man for the beauty of body which belongs to him from his birth, because he was not himself the maker of his body ; but we ought to praise the artificer, that is, human nature, which

when it is not hampered by its subject matter imparts so much beauty to it. And therefore the priest aptly said to the Emperor, who laughed to scorn the ugliness of his body, 'God is Lord, He made us and not we ourselves.' And these are the words of the Prophet in a verse of the Psalter written down without addition or subtraction just as in the rejoinder of the priest. And so let those misbegotten wretches look to it, who bestow all their pains on bedecking their person, which ought as a whole to be invested with dignity; for this is to do naught but adorn another's work and neglect their own.

To return, therefore, to the main point, I say that our intellect for lack of that virtue by which it draws to itself that which it perceives (I mean an organic virtue, namely, imagination), cannot rise to certain things because the imagination cannot help it, as it has not wherewithal. Such, for example, are substances separate from matter, which, although we may to some extent speculate about them, we cannot understand or apprehend perfectly. And for this a man is not to be blamed, for he was not the author of this defect; rather was it universal nature that so ordained, that is God, who willed to deprive us of this light during this present life; and why He so ordained it would be presumptuous for us to discuss. So that if my speculation carried me away to a region where the imagination lagged behind the intellect, though I cannot understand I am not therefore to be blamed. Furthermore, a limit is set to our ability in all its operations not by ourselves but by universal nature, and therefore we must know that the bounds of our capacity give wider range for thought than for speech, and wider range for speech than for the language of signs. Therefore, if our thought, not only such thought as does

not arrive at perfect understanding but even that which culminates in perfect understanding, is too strong for words, we are not to blame, since we are not the authors of this defect. Therefore I make it plain that I am in very truth excusing myself when I say, 'Let the blame thereof rest on the weakness of our understanding, and on our speech which hath not strength to report all that Love hath to say.' For the goodwill to which we ought to have regard in estimating men's deserts ought to be very clearly visible in us. This then is the meaning of the first chief division of this Canzone which is now under consideration.

V. Since the meaning of the first part has been unveiled in the course of our discussion on it, we have now to go on to the second. The better to apprehend this part, we will divide it into three sections, corresponding to the three stanzas in which it is comprised. For in the first section I extol this lady without reserve or exception, both in her soul and in her body; in the second I come down to the special praise of the soul, and in the third to the special praise of the body. The first section begins, 'The sun who circleth round all the world ne'er beholdeth'; the second begins, 'Into her descendeth virtue divine'; the third begins, 'Things in her aspect appear'; and these sections are now to be discussed in order.

I affirm, therefore, that 'The sun who circleth round all the world ne'er beholdeth', where, in order to have perfect understanding, we must know in what manner the world is circled round by the sun. First, I say that by the term 'world' I do not here mean the whole body of the Universe, but only this portion of sea and land which, in ordinary language, is usually so designated. Hence any one says,

‘That man has seen the whole world,’ meaning thereby this portion of sea and of land.

Pythagoras and his followers maintained that this world was one of the stars, and that there was another of like fashion opposite to it; and to this they gave the name Antichthon. And he said that both were situate in a single sphere which revolved from East to West, and that the sun circled round the earth because of this revolution, and sometimes was visible, and sometimes not. He held also that fire was between the earth and Antichthon, maintaining that among bodies fire was nobler than water and earth, and that among the positions of the four simple bodies, the centre was noblest. Hence he affirmed that fire, when it seemed to leap upwards, was in truth descending to the centre.

In later times Plato was of a different opinion and wrote, in one of his books called *Timæus*, that the earth with the sea was indeed the centre of all, but that its whole orb revolved round its own axis following the primal movement of the heaven, though much retarded by its own gross matter, and by its remoteness from the heaven.

These opinions are rejected as false in the second book of *Heaven and the World*, by that glorious philosopher to whom Nature most fully revealed her secrets; and it is there proved by him that the earth stands steadfast in itself, and fixed for all eternity. But it is not my intention here to recount the reasons which Aristotle alleges to controvert these men and to confirm the truth; for it is enough for those whom I am addressing to know on his weighty authority that this earth is fixed, and does not revolve, and that with the sea it is the centre of the heaven.

This heaven, as we see, revolves round this centre unceasingly; and in this revolution there must of necessity be

two fixed poles, and one circle equidistant from these, and revolving most rapidly. Of these two poles one, viz. the northern, is plainly visible to almost all the land which is not covered by the ocean, the other, viz. the southern, is hidden from almost all of it. The circle, which is conceived to be midway between the poles, is that part of the heaven under which the sun revolves when he moves in company with the Ram or with the Scales.

Hence we must know that if a stone could be dropped from this pole of ours, it would fall yonder into the ocean exactly on that ridge of the sea where, if a man were standing, he would have the pole-star always over the middle of his head ; and I believe that from Rome to that spot, measured due north, the distance would be about two thousand, seven hundred miles, a little more or less. Let us then imagine, in order to have a clearer picture, that in this spot which I have mentioned, there is a city, and that its name is Maria.

I say, further, that if from the other, that is, from the southern pole, a stone should be dropped, it would fall on that ridge of the ocean which on the ball of earth is exactly opposite to Maria ; and I believe that from Rome to the spot where the second stone would fall the distance, going due south, would be about seven thousand, five hundred miles, a little more or less. And here let us imagine a second city, which may be called Lucia, and from whichever side a cord might be stretched from it, the distance from one city to the other as ten thousand, two hundred miles, and so, the distance between the two as half the circumference of this earth ; so that the citizens of Maria would have their feet planted opposite to the feet of the citizens of Lucia.

Let us also imagine a circle on this ball which should be at all points as far from Maria as from Lucia. I believe (so



far as I understand from the opinions of the astrologers, and from the opinion of Albert of Germany in his book *On the nature of Places, and on the Properties of the Elements*, and also from the testimony of Lucan in his ninth book) that this circle would divide this earth left bare of the ocean there in the South almost along the whole extremity of the first zone, where among other peoples are the Garamantes who go almost always unclad, to whom Cato with the people of Rome came when fleeing from the lordship of Caesar.

When we have marked these three places on this ball, we may easily see how the sun circles round it. I say then that the heaven of the Sun revolves from West to East not point-blank against the daily movement, i. e. the succession of day and night, but obliquely against it. So that the equator of the heaven of the Sun, in which the body of the sun is situate, lying evenly between its poles, cuts the circle of the two farthest poles on two opposite sides, that is, in the starting-point of the Ram, and in the starting-point of the Scales, and diverges from this circle along two arcs, one curving towards the North, the other towards the South. The summits of these two arcs are equidistant from the circle of the poles in either direction by twenty-three degrees and a point more, and one summit is the starting-point of the Crab, and the other that of Capricornus. It therefore must needs happen that, when the sun passes beneath the equator of the two first poles, Maria would see this sun at the starting-point of the Ram in circling round the world as he descends on the earth or the sea, like a mill-stone of which not more than the half is seen; and would see him approach when rising after the fashion of the screw of a press, until he completes ninety-one revolutions and a little more. When these revolutions are completed he ascends above

Maria almost as far as he ascends above us in the middle of the Earth at mid tierce, when day and night are equal. And if a man stood upright in Maria, and always kept his face turned to the sun, it would be seen moving towards his right. Afterwards the sun appears to descend by the same path during another ninety-one revolutions and a little more until he circles entirely round down to the earth or the sea, only showing part of himself; and afterwards he is hidden, and begins to be visible to Lucia. She then sees the sun rising and descending in the same way round herself, with the same number of revolutions as were seen by Maria. And if a man stood upright in Lucia, always turning his face sunwards, he would see the sun depart on his left. Thus it may be perceived that these two places in the course of the year have a day of six months, and a night of the same length; and that when it is day at one place, it is night at the other.

It also must needs be that, when the sun enters the Ram, the circle in which the Garamantes live on this ball, as has been said, would see him revolving exactly overhead, not like a mill-stone, but like a wheel, only half of which can be seen from any one point. And afterwards this circle sees him moving away from itself and approaching Maria during ninety-one days and a little more, and returning back to itself during the like period. And afterwards when he has returned he enters the Scales, and again departs and moves towards Lucia for ninety-one days, and returns in as many more. And this region, which extends round the whole of the ball, always has a day and night of equal length, whether the sun is travelling on this side of it or on that, and it has in the year two summers of the most intense heat, and two short winters. It also must needs be that the view of the sun from the two spaces which lie between these two

imaginary cities and the equator must vary, according as the point of view is nearer to or further away from the cities, as now may be perceived by any one of noble mind which may well be left to take a little trouble. Wherefore we may now see that by the divine providence the world is so ordered that, when the sphere of the sun has completed a revolution and returned to its original place, every part of this ball on which we live passes through as long a period of light as of darkness. O unspeakable Wisdom who hast so ordained, how poor is our capacity to apprehend thee! And ye for whose advantage and pleasure I am writing, in what blindness ye live, not lifting up your eyes to these things, but keeping them fixed on the slough of your folly!

VI. In the last chapter it has been shown how the sun circles round the earth, so that now we may go on to demonstrate the meaning of that division with which we are concerned. I say, therefore, that in this first section I begin to extol this lady by comparing her with all other things. And I say that the sun in circling round the world 'Ne'er beholdeth aught so noble as this lady', from which it follows that she is, as the words affirm, the most noble of all things on which the sun shines. And I say, 'In that hour, &c.' Wherefore we must know that the word 'hour' is understood in two senses by astrologers. One sense is employed when they assign twenty-four hours to the day and night, that is, twelve to the day and twelve to the night, however long or short the day may be. And these hours become short or long in the day and in the night, according as the day and night wax and wane. And the Church uses hours in this sense when she speaks of Prime, Tierce, Sext, and None; and these are called temporal hours. The other sense is employed

when, of the twenty-four hours allotted to the day and night, the day sometimes has fifteen and the night nine, and sometimes the night has sixteen and the day eight assigned to it, according as the day and the night wax and wane ; and these are called equal hours. And at the equinox these latter are always one and the same with those which are called temporal ; for it must needs be so when the day and the night are of the same length.

Afterwards, when I say 'Every intelligence on high gazeth on her', I extol her without reference to anything else. And I affirm that the Intelligences of the heaven gaze on her, and that those who are noble among folk here on earth think of her when they have most of that which delights them. And here we must know that every intellect on high, as is written in the book *On Causes*, knows what is above itself and what is below itself. It therefore knows God as being its cause ; it therefore knows what is below itself as being its effect. And since God is the most universal cause of everything, in knowing Him these beings know everything according to the measure of their intelligence. Wherefore all Intelligences know the form of man so far as it is determined by thought in the divine mind. Most of all is it known to the Intelligences that set things moving, because they are especially causes of the human and of every other generic form ; and they know this in the highest perfection that it can possibly attain as their rule and pattern. And if this form of man when reproduced in individuals is not perfect, that is not the fault of the pattern above mentioned, but of the matter which constitutes the individuality. Therefore, when I say 'Every intelligence on high gazeth on her', I do not mean to affirm aught else save that she is made thus as being the pattern of man's essence existing in

thought within the divine mind ; and that she is also made thus by the virtue that resides most of all in those angelic minds which together with the heaven are the artificers of all things here below.

And to confirm this I add the words, ‘ And that folk who on earth are enamoured, &c.’ Here it should be known that everything most of all desires its own perfection, and in this all its desires are appeased, and for the sake of this everything is desired. And this is that desire which always makes every delight appear to us defective, for no delight in this life is so great as to be able to assuage the thirst of our soul, so that the desire above mentioned should not still remain in our thought. And because this lady is truly that perfection, I say that those folk who here below receive the greatest delight, when they enjoy most peace have her fixed in their thoughts. By this I affirm that she is as completely perfect as the essence of man can possibly be.

Afterwards, when I say ‘ Her being so greatly pleaseth Him who bestoweth it on her ’, I show that this lady is not only most perfect so far as what is born of man can be, but more than most perfect so far as she receives more of the divine goodness than is due to man. Hence we may reasonably believe that as every master workman loves the best of his works more than any other, so God loves the best of human beings more than all the rest. And since His bounty is not of necessity restricted within any limits, His love has no respect to the due of him who receives it, but exceeds it in the gift and benefaction of virtue and grace. Wherefore I say here that God Himself who gives her being, through love for her perfection infuses into her of His goodness beyond the limits of what is due to our nature. .

Afterwards, when I say ‘ Her pure soul ’, I give proof of

what is said by the evidence of the senses. Here we must know that, as the Philosopher affirms in the second book *On the Soul*, the soul is the actuality of the body, and if it is the actuality of the body it is its cause, and since, as is written in the book *On Causes* just quoted, every cause infuses into its effect something of the excellence which it receives from its own cause, the soul infuses into and bestows on its body something of the excellence of its own cause, namely, God. Wherefore inasmuch as in her, so far as concerns the body, marvellous things are perceived to such an extent that they make every beholder desirous of seeing them, it is manifest that her form, that is, her soul, which brings the body with it as being its proper cause, miraculously receives the gracious goodness of God. And thus I prove by her outward presence that beyond all that is due to our nature (which attains its highest perfection in her as was said above), this lady is enriched and ennobled by God. And this is all the literal meaning of the first part of the second main division.

VII. Having extolled this lady generally both as regards her soul and as regards her body, I go on to extol her specially as regards her soul. And first I extol her inasmuch as her excellence is great in itself, and secondly I extol her inasmuch as her excellence is great in its action on others and useful to the world. And this second part begins with the words, 'Of her it may be said, &c.'

Therefore I say first, 'Into her descendeth virtue divine.' Here we must know that the divine goodness descends into all things; and otherwise they could not exist. But although this goodness starts from the simplest principle it is received in diverse measure, as regards quantity, by the things which receive it. Wherefore it is written in the book *On Causes*,

'The Primal Goodness sends His bounties upon all things with a single diffusion.' Everything indeed receives of this diffusion according to the measure of its virtue and of its essence. And our senses can supply an example of this from the sun. We see that the light of the sun which is single and drawn from a single source, is received diversely by the various bodies. So Albert, in the book which he composed *On the Intellect*, affirms that certain bodies, because they have much clearness of transparency mingled with their nature, no sooner are looked upon by the sun than they become so bright that by the multiplication of light in them and in their aspect they transmit from themselves great brilliancy to others. Such bodies are gold and certain precious stones. There are certain other bodies which being altogether transparent not only admit the light but offer no obstacle to it, nay, they transmit it coloured with their own hue to other things. And there are certain other bodies so surpassing in the purity of their transparency as to become so radiant that they overpower the harmony of the eye, and do not allow themselves to be gazed upon without distress to the sight, as for instance, mirrors. Certain other bodies are so devoid of transparency that they receive but little of the light, as for instance, the earth. Thus the excellence of God is received in one way by separate substances, that is, by angels, who are free from all coarseness of matter, being, as it were, transparent by reason of the purity of their form; in another way by the soul of man which, although under one aspect free from matter, is hampered by it under another, (like a person wholly immersed in water except the head, of whom it cannot be said that he is altogether in the water or out of it); in another way by the animals whose soul is wholly confined within matter,

but yet, I say, this excellence is received so far as their soul is ennobled ; in another way by minerals, and in another way by the earth and by the other elements, since the earth is most completely material, and therefore most distant from and most completely out of relation with the simplest and noblest primal virtue which is purely intellectual, namely, God.

And although we have here laid down gradations of classes we can, none the less, lay down gradations among individuals, that is, we can assume that among human souls one receives this excellence differently from another. And in the intellectual order of the universe things ascend and descend by almost continuous gradations from the lowest to the highest form, and from the highest to the lowest, as we see in the visible order. And between the nature of angels, which is a thing intellectual, and the soul of man there is no intervening grade, but the one is, as it were, continuous with the other by means of the orders within the gradations ; and between the soul of man and the most perfect soul of any dumb animal there is further nothing intermediate ; and we see many men so vile and of such base condition that they appear to be hardly anything but brutes. For these reasons we may therefore assume and firmly believe that there is some human being so noble and of such lofty condition that he can be hardly anything but an angel ; for, if not, the human species would not be continuous in both directions, which is impossible. Such as these Aristotle, in the seventh book of the *Ethics*, calls divine. And such I affirm this lady to be, so that the divine virtue, in the same way as it descends into angels, descends into her.

Afterwards, when I say ‘ And let any gentle lady who believeth not this ’, I confirm this by the experience which



may be had of her in those operations which are peculiar to the rational soul, into which the divine light radiates with less hindrance, I mean in speech and in the acts which are wont to be called behaviour and carriage.

Wherefore it must be remembered that man alone among animals has the gift of speech, and has a behaviour and acts which are called rational, since he alone possesses reason in himself. And if any one contradicting us should wish to affirm that a certain bird speaks, as seems true of some birds, especially of the magpie and the parrot, and that certain beasts perform actions or behave themselves, as seems the case with the ape and some others, I reply that it is not true that they speak or behave themselves, because they do not possess reason from which such effects must needs flow. Nor have they in themselves the principle of these operations, nor do they know what this is, nor do they design to express anything by these means, but they only reproduce what they see and hear. Hence as the image of bodies is reproduced in some shining body, as, for instance, a mirror, and so the corporeal image shown in the mirror is not a reality, thus the reflection of reason, namely, the acts and the speech which a dumb animal reproduces or exhibits, is not real.

I say that 'Any gentle lady who believeth not' what I say should 'go with her and behold her acts' (I do not say any man, because it is more decorous that ladies should gain this experience than men); and I say what any lady in her company will think about her, mentioning the effect of her speech and of her behaviour. For her speech, by reason of her loftiness and sweetness, engenders in the mind of the listener a thought of love, which I call a heavenly spirit because its origin is from above, and its message comes from above as has been told already. From this thought we go

on to a sure opinion that this is the marvellous Lady of virtue. And her acts on account of their sweetness and moderation cause love to be awakened and felt wherever the faculty of love is sown in the soil of a good nature. This natural sowing goes on as is shown in the following Tractate.

Afterwards, when I say 'Of her it may be said, &c.', I mean, to relate how the excellence and virtue of her soul is good and useful for others, and first of all how it is useful for other ladies, adding, 'Noble in every lady is all that in her is found,' where I supply all ladies with a conspicuous pattern, by gazing on which they may be able to assume an air of nobility as they follow it.

In the second place I relate how she is useful for all mankind, saying that her aspect aids our faith, which more than anything else is useful to the human race, as being that by which we escape eternal death and gain everlasting life. And she aids our faith, for since the chiefest foundation for our faith is laid in the miracles performed by Him who was crucified, who created our reason and willed that it should be inferior to His power, and also in those miracles afterwards performed in His name by His Saints, (though there are many so obstinate that they stand in doubt of these miracles because a certain mist obscures them, and cannot believe any miracle if they do not have ocular experience of it); and since this lady is a thing visibly miraculous, of which the eyes of men may daily have experience, and this marvel makes all others possible in our eyes, it is plain that this lady with her wondrous aspect assists our faith. Therefore, lastly, I say that 'From eternity', that is, everlastingly, was she ordained in the mind of God to bear witness of the faith to those who live in these days. And thus ends the

second part of the second main division regarded in its literal meaning.

VIII. Among the products of divine wisdom man is the most wonderful, if we consider how the divine virtue combined three natures in one form, and how nicely man's body must be brought into harmony with such a form, since it is furnished with organs for almost all its powers. Wherefore by reason of the manifold harmony which must needs exist between so many organs if they are to correspond properly with each other, few men in all this great number are perfect. And if this divine creature is so wonderful we certainly ought to be fearful in treating of her estate not merely in words but even in thought, according to those words of the book of *Ecclesiasticus*, 'The wisdom of God existing before all things who hath sought out ?' and to those other words where the same book says, 'Seek not the things that are too high for thee, neither search the things that are above thy strength: but what God has commanded thee think thereupon, and in His further works be not curious,' that is, anxious. I, therefore, who in this third section intend to speak of some particulars relating to this created being, so far as through the goodness of her soul beauty appears visibly in her body, purpose to begin with fear and not with confidence to untie, if not the whole, at least some part of so hard a knot.

I affirm, therefore, that, since we have now ascertained the meaning of this section in which this lady is extolled with regard to her soul, we must now go on to perceive how, in saying that 'things appear in her aspect', I extol her with regard to her body. And I say that in her aspect things appear which reveal 'some of the joys' (among the many other joys) 'of Paradise'. The noblest pleasure, and that

which writings set down as the end of all other pleasures, is to feel content, and this is the same as to be blest ; and this pleasure, although in a different way, is truly found in the aspect of this lady, because all persons when they look upon her feel content, with such pleasure does her beauty feed the eyes of those who behold her. But this contentment is different in kind from that felt in Paradise, which is everlasting ; for this everlasting contentment cannot fall to any one here.

And since some one might have wished to ask in what part of her person this wondrous pleasure manifests itself in her, I distinguish in her person two parts in which the expression of human pleasure or displeasure is most apparent. Wherefore we must know that in whatever part the soul performs most of her proper function she directs her attention most fixedly on this part for its adornment, and works therein with most nicety. Wherefore we see that on a man's countenance, where the soul performs more of its office than in any other external part, she bestows such nice attention that, because she there makes as fine distinctions as are possible in her subject matter, no face is the counterpart of another ; and by this means the final potentiality latent in the subject matter, which is in all cases somewhat different, is here reduced to actuality. And since in the face the soul operates chiefly in two places, because in these two places all three natures of the soul, as it were, have jurisdiction, I mean in the eyes and in the mouth, she adorns these most of all, and directs her whole attention thither to beautify them as far as possible. And in these two places I affirm that these pleasures appear by saying, 'In her eyes and in her sweet smile.' These two places by a graceful simile may be called balconies of the lady, namely, the soul, who dwells in

the edifice of the body, for she oft-times shows herself there though as it were under a veil.

She reveals herself in the eyes so manifestly that any one who gazes intently on her may know her feeling at the moment. Wherefore inasmuch as there are six Passions peculiar to the human soul, which the Philosopher mentions in his *Rhetoric*, namely, favour, jealousy, compassion, envy, love, and shame, the soul cannot be inspired by any of these without letting the semblance of them appear at the window of the eyes, 'unless by a great exertion of power she keep it confined within. Wherefore some ere now have put out their eyes in order that the feeling of shame within may not appear on the surface, as the poet Statius affirms of Oedipus the Theban when he says that 'with the aid of eternal night he freed himself from his guilty shame'.

The soul shows herself in the mouth almost like colour under glass. And what is laughter but a scintillation of the soul's delight, that is, a gleam showing itself without, no otherwise than it exists within? And therefore it is seemly in a man, in order that he may show himself moderate in his merriment, to laugh with becoming restraint and with little movement of his arms, so that the lady who then displays herself, as has been said, may seem modest and not abandoned. Wherefore the book *On the Four Cardinal Virtues* gives this injunction, 'Let thy laughter be without cachinnation, that is, without cackling like a hen.' Oh, wonderful smile of my lady of whom I speak, which never is seen save in her eye!

And I say that in her Love summons these things thither as to their proper place. And here Love may be considered under two aspects; first the love felt in the soul which is specially displayed in these parts; secondly, that universal

love which disposes things to love and to be loved, and fits the soul for the adornment of these parts.

Afterwards, when I say they 'surpass our intellect', I excuse myself for seeming to have so little to say of such excellent beauty when dealing with that; and I affirm that I say little about it for two reasons. One of these is that the things which appear in her aspect 'surpass our intellect', that is, man's, and I say how this surpassing comes about; it surpasses the intellect in the same way as the sun surpasses weak sight, not indeed that which is healthy and strong. The second reason is that we cannot look fixedly upon her aspect because the soul becomes intoxicated thereby, so that incontinently after gazing on it, she goes astray in all her operations.

Afterwards, when I say 'Her beauty raineth down flakes of fire', I return to the treatment of its effect, since it is not possible for me to treat of it as a whole. Wherefore we must know that of all those things which surpass our intellect so that it cannot perceive what they are, it is most convenient to treat by means of their effects. And by treating of God and of separate substances of His creation and of primal matter in this fashion, we are able to obtain some knowledge of them. And therefore I say that the beauty of this lady 'raineth down flakes of fire', meaning by this a glow of love and tenderness 'ensouled by a gentle spirit', that is, with a glow inspired by a gentle spirit, or in other words, by right desire, by means of and from which all good thought springs up and is born. And her beauty not only does this, but undoes and destroys that which is contrary to it, namely, inborn vice which is the most deadly enemy of all good thoughts.

And here we must know that there are certain vices in man to which he is naturally prone, as, for instance, certain

men are prone to anger through a choleric complexion; and such vices are inborn, that is, implanted by nature. There are other vices due to habit for which men's constitution is not to blame, but their habit, as, for example, intemperance, especially in wine. These vices are shunned and overcome by means of a good habit, and through its aid a man becomes virtuous without finding difficulty in his self-restraint, as the Philosopher affirms in the second book of the *Ethics*. And in truth there is this difference between feelings implanted by nature and those produced by habit, namely, that the latter are altogether superseded by good habits since their principle, namely, bad habit, is destroyed by its contrary; but feelings that are inborn, the principle of which belongs to the nature of him who is affected by them, although they are much weakened by good habits, do not disappear altogether so far as regards the first impulse (though they do indeed disappear altogether so far as regards their continuance), because habit here is not a match for nature in which their source lies.<sup>n</sup> And therefore a man who, though ill endowed by nature, guides and directs himself aright in spite of his natural impulses, is more praiseworthy than one who, being well endowed by nature, keeps himself in good behaviour, or returns to the right path when he has wandered from it, just as it is more praiseworthy to manage a vicious horse than one which has no vice. I affirm, therefore, that these flakes of fire which are rained down from her beauty as was said, 'shatter inborn vices,' that is, those implanted by nature, in order that it may be understood that her beauty has power to renovate nature in those who behold her, which is a marvellous thing. And this confirms what has been said about her in the previous chapter when I say that she is the helper of our faith.

Last of all, when I say ‘Therefore let any lady who heareth her beauty’, under colour of admonishing others, I sum up the end for which such beauty was created. And I say that any lady who hears her beauty blamed for its defects should gaze on this most perfect pattern ; whereby it is meant that she was created not only to make a good thing better, but also to turn a bad thing into a good.

And at the end is added, ‘This lady was the thought of Him who set the universe in motion,’ that is, God, in order that it may be understood that nature produced such an effect through the divine purpose. And so ends all the second main division of this Canzone.

IX. Since in pursuit of my design the two former divisions of this Canzone have first been made the subject of my discourse, the order of the present Tractate requires me to go on to the third division, in which I mean to clear this Canzone from a reproach which might have been injurious to her. The reproach is this, namely, that before I undertook to compose it, when this lady seemed to become somewhat proud and haughty towards me, I made a short Ballata in which I called this lady disdainful and pitiless which seems to contradict the discourse which I have held of her above. And therefore I turn to the Canzone and under the pretence of teaching her how she should excuse herself I exculpate her. And when one speaks to things inanimate, this is a figure which is called by the rhetoricians *Prosopopea*, and is very often employed by poets.

‘O Canzone, it seemeth that thy speech is contrary, &c.’ The explanation of this, in order that it may be more easily understood, must needs be divided into three sections. For in the first place it is stated what has need of excuse ;



afterwards I go on with the excuse, when I say, 'Thou knowest that the heaven'; lastly, I speak to the Canzone as to a person instructed in what is to be done when I say, 'Thus make thine excuse if thou needs must.'

I say, therefore, in the first section, 'O Canzone, who speakest of this lady with such praise, it seemeth that thou art contrary to a little sister of thine.' I use the word 'sister' metaphorically, for as a woman who is begotten by one and the same parent is called a sister, so a man may call that work which is wrought by one and the same agent a sister, for our agency is in some sense a begetting. And I say how she appears contrary to the Ballata when I add, 'Thou makest her lowly and that sister maketh her haughty,' that is, 'fierce and disdainful,' which means the same.

Having stated this charge I go on to defend her with the help of an example in which the reality is sometimes at variance with the appearance, and may be treated as unlike, if viewed under a different aspect. I add, 'Thou knowest that the heaven is ever bright and shining,' because brightness is always a quality of the sky, though at times for some reasons it is allowable to call the sky dark. Here we must know that, properly speaking, only colour and light are visible, as Aristotle affirms in the second book *On the Soul* and in the book *On Sense and the Object of Sense*. It is true that other things are visible, but not in the proper meaning of the word, because they are perceived by some other sense, so that they cannot be said properly to be either visible or tangible. Such things, for example, are figure, size, number, movement, and rest, all of which are called objects common to the senses, and are perceived by more senses than one. But colour and light are properly speaking visible, because we apprehend them by sight alone, that is, with the aid of

no other sense. These visible things, as well those peculiar to the sight as those common to more senses than one, so far as they are visible, enter into the eye, I do not mean the things themselves but their forms, through the transparent medium, not materially but mentally, just as into transparent glass. And in the water which is in the pupil of the eye this passage which the visible form makes through its medium is brought to a stand because this water has a boundary, in this respect resembling a mirror, which is glass bounded by lead, so that the form cannot proceed any further, but is arrested there like a ball that is checked by a blow. So that the form which is not seen in the transparent medium becomes bright when it is arrested, and this is the reason why the reflection is seen in glass when it is leaded and not otherwise. Starting from this pupil, the visual spirit which runs on from the pupil to the front part of the brain, where the power of the sense resides as in its original source, on a sudden instantaneously reproduces the form, and thus we see. Wherefore in order that the vision of the form may be truthful, that is to say, such as the object of vision is in itself, it is meet that the medium through which the form comes to the eye should be colourless, and so also the water in the pupil ; otherwise the visual form would be stained with the colour of the medium, and with that of the pupil. And therefore those who wish to make things appear of a certain colour in a mirror interpose some of that colour between the glass and the lead, so that the glass remains suffused with it. In truth Plato and other philosophers affirmed that our vision was brought about, not because the object of sight came to the eye, but because the visual power went out to the object. And this opinion is censured as false by the Philosopher in his book *On Sense and the Object of Sense*.

Now that we have considered this explanation of sight, it may easily be perceived that although a star may from one point of view be clear and shining, and not susceptible of any change except through movement in space, as is proved in the treatise *On Heaven and the World*, yet for many reasons it may appear to be not clear and not shining, because this appearance may be due to the medium which is continually changing. This medium is changed from a bright to a dim light, as, for instance, in the presence or absence of the sun ; and in the sun's presence the medium, which is transparent, is so full of light as to overpower the star, and for this reason the star no longer appears shining. This medium is also changed from rare to dense, from dry to moist, by the vapours of the earth which are constantly ascending. This medium, when thus changed, changes the image of the star which is transmitted through it, by its density making it dark, and by moisture or dryness imparting colour to it.

Therefore a star may also wear this appearance on account of the visual organ, that is, the eye, which from weakness and from weariness undergoes a change and exhibits some colour and some lack of power. For example, it often happens that when the sheath of the pupil becomes much bloodshot through infirmity caused by weakness, almost all things appear ruddy, and so thereby the star appears tinged with colour. And because the sight is weakened, some dispersion of the visual spirit takes place in it, so that an object is no longer seen as concentrated, but appears diffused, almost in the same way as our writing on damp paper. And this is the reason why many persons when they wish to read, remove writing to a distance from the eye in order that the image may enter the eye more smoothly, and in a finer shape ; and by this means writing remains better

discriminated in the vision. And therefore the star also may appear blurred, as of this I myself had experience in the same year in which this Canzone was produced, for through greatly overtaking my sight by studious reading, I so weakened the visual spirits that the stars all appeared to me to be discoloured by a kind of white haze. And by giving the eyes a long rest in dark and cool rooms, and by cooling the ball of the eye with pure water, I regained the power that had been dispersed, so that I recovered the former healthy condition of the sight. And thus for the reasons above mentioned there appear to be many causes why a star may appear other than it really is.

X. Leaving this digression which has been necessary for perceiving the truth, I return to the main point and affirm that as at times 'our eyes call', that is judge, 'the star' otherwise than it is in its actual state, so this little Ballata, through infirmity of the soul which was possessed by excessive desire, measured this lady according to outward show at variance with the reality. And this I declare when I say that the soul was so affrighted that what I saw in her aspect appeared to me fierce. Here it must be known that the more closely the agent is united with the patient the stronger is the feeling, as may be understood from the view of the Philosopher expressed in his book *On Generation*. Wherefore the more closely the object desired approaches the subject that feels the desire, the stronger does this become, and the more completely the soul is possessed by the feeling the more closely does it unite itself with the appetitive part, and the more completely does it surrender reason; so that then it no longer judges persons as human beings judge them, but almost as the lower animals, only according

to their outward appearance and not according to their reality. And this is the reason why her mien, though in reality decorous, appears to us disdainful and cruel; and in accordance with some such judgement of the senses this little Ballata spoke. And hereby, through the disagreement of this Canzone with the Ballata, it is plainly understood that the former regards this lady according to the reality.

And I do not say without good cause 'where she taketh heed of me', and not 'where I take heed of her'. But hereby I wish to intimate the great power which her eyes exercised over me, for their rays passed through me on all sides as if I had been transparent. And for this natural and supernatural reasons might be assigned; but here let it suffice to have said thus much; elsewhere I will discourse more suitably.

Afterwards, when I say 'Thus make thine excuse if thou needs must', I charge my Canzone that, for the reasons above mentioned, she should excuse herself there where excuse is needed, that is, where some one may have raised a doubt about this contradiction. This is as much as to say that whoever feels a doubt about this disagreement between this Canzone and that little Ballata, should pay heed to the plea advanced. And a rhetorical figure of this kind is highly praiseworthy and even necessary, I mean a figure of speech in which the words are pointed at one person and the meaning at another; for admonition is always praiseworthy and necessary, but does not always come appropriately from the lips of every one. Thus, when a son is cognizant of a father's vice and a subject of that of his lord, and when a friend knows that he would increase the shame of a friend, or impair the respect due to him by admonishing him, or when he knows that his friend is not patient but

irritable under admonition, this figure of speech is most seemly and useful, and it may be called *Dissimulation*. And it is like the proceeding of a skilful soldier who shows fight against a fortress on one side in order to draw off the defence from another, for then the attention of the defenders is directed to a different quarter from that of the main assault.

And I charge my Canzone also that she should ask leave of this lady to speak concerning her. Here it should be understood that a man ought not to be forward to praise another without giving very exact heed to ascertain if this be to the pleasure of the person whom he praises; for many times a man, whether through the fault of the speaker or through that of the hearer, inflicts blame when he believes himself to be conferring praise. So that it is proper to show great discretion in this matter; and this discretion is, one may say, the asking of leave to praise in the way in which I bid this Canzone to ask for it. And so ends the whole of the literal sense of this poetical comment; wherefore the order of my task requires me now to follow up its true meaning, and to proceed to the allegorical exposition.

XI. As the order requires, I return again to the beginning and say that this lady is that mistress of the intellect who is called Philosophy. But since praise naturally implants the desire to become acquainted with the person praised; and to become acquainted with anything is the same as to know what it is, considered in itself and in relation to all its causes, as the Philosopher says in the beginning of the *Physics*; and since this is not shown by the name (although the name denotes this, as is said in the fourth book of the *Metaphysics*, where it is affirmed that a definition is that conception which is signified by a name), I must needs now,

before going any further with her praises, say and explain what it is that is called Philosophy, that is to say, what the name 'philosophy' signifies. And afterwards when the meaning of Philosophy has been explained the present allegory will be more effectively handled. And I will first say who first bestowed this name; afterwards I will go on to its meaning.

I say, therefore, that of old time in Italy, almost at the beginning of the foundation of Rome (which was seven hundred and fifty years, a little more or less, before the Saviour's advent as Paulus Orosius writes), about contemporary with Numa Pompilius, second king of the Romans, there lived a most noble philosopher named Pythagoras. And that he lived at this time appears from a reference which Titus Livius makes to something about the matter in the first part of his work. And before Pythagoras the followers of knowledge were called not philosophers but wise men, such as were those seven sages of remote antiquity, as the world still names them on the strength of fame, the first of whom was called Solon, the second Chilon, the third Periander, the fourth Thales, the fifth Cleobulus, the sixth Bias, the seventh Pittacus. This Pythagoras when asked whether he deemed himself wise disclaimed this title for himself, and said that he was not wise but a lover of wisdom. Hence it came to pass in after time that all who followed the pursuit of wisdom were called lovers of wisdom, that is, philosophers, for the Greek word *philos* means the same as *amator* in Latin, hence we say *philos*, that is, lover and *sophia*, that is, wisdom, so that the two words *philos* and *sophia* are the same as a 'lover of wisdom'; wherefore we may remark that it is a word indicative not of presumption but of humility. From the word 'philosopher' is derived

the word for that activity which is peculiar to the philosopher; just as from 'friend' is derived the word expressing the distinctive activity of a friend, namely, friendship. Thus it may be seen, when we mark the significance of the first and of the second part of the word, that philosophy is nothing but friendship for wisdom or knowledge; wherefore in one sense every one may be called a philosopher in consequence of the natural love which engenders the desire of knowledge in every one. But since the feelings pertaining to man's essence are common to all mankind, we do not refer to these feelings when we use a word specially distinctive of some one who shares this essence. Hence when we speak of John as a friend of Martin, we do not mean to express merely that natural friendship which makes all men friends of all other men, but that friendship which is engendered over and above the former, and is peculiar and distinctive in individual persons. Thus no one is called a philosopher by reason of that love which is common to all.

Aristotle contends in the eighth book of the *Ethics* that the name of friend should be bestowed on one whose friendship is not concealed from the person loved, and to whom the person loved is also a friend, so that goodwill should be felt on both sides; and this must needs come to pass on account either of advantage or of pleasure or of worth. And thus, if a man is to be a philosopher, there must needs be love for wisdom which inspires one of the parties with goodwill; there must needs be devotion and interest which inspire the other party also with goodwill, so that intimacy and demonstration of goodwill arise between them. Wherefore without love and without devotion no one can be called a philosopher, but both of these conditions are required. And just as friendship contracted on account of pleasure



or advantage is only accidentally, not really friendship, as the *Ethics* prove to us, so philosophy pursued for the sake of pleasure or advantage is accidentally, not really philosophy. Therefore no one is to be called a true philosopher who is a friend of wisdom in any of her aspects for the sake of some pleasure. Such are many who delight in reciting Canzoni and devoting themselves to these, and who delight to study rhetoric and music, and shun or forsake the other sciences which are all branches of wisdom. He who is a lover of wisdom for the sake of advantage ought not to be called a true philosopher : such are lawyers, physicians, and almost all who are vowed to religion, who study not in order to gain wisdom but in order to gain money or rank ; and if any one should give them what they desire to gain they would not persevere in the study. And just as among the different kinds of friendship that which exists for the sake of advantage can least be called friendship, so such as these have less share in the name of philosopher than any one else. Wherefore just as friendship formed on account of worth is genuine and perfect and lasting, so philosophy is genuine and perfect when it is engendered by worth only without regard to anything else, and by the goodness of the friendly soul, that is to say, through right desire and right reason. Thus as true friendship among men exists only when each individual loves every other, so we may here affirm that the true philosopher loves each part of wisdom, and that wisdom loves each part of the philosopher, so far as she brings him wholly under her control and does not allow any of his thoughts to be diverted to other things. Wherefore Wisdom herself says in the *Proverbs* of Solomon, ‘ I love those who love me.’ And just as true friendship, when considered in itself alone apart from the mind, has for its subject

matter the knowledge of well-doing and for its form the desire for this, so philosophy considered in itself apart from the soul has understanding for its subject matter and for its form an almost divine love for the intellect. And just as virtue is the efficient cause of true friendship, so truth is the efficient cause of philosophy. And as worthy delight which springs from living together in accordance with humanity in the proper sense, that is in accordance with reason, is the end of true friendship, as Aristotle seems to think in the ninth book of the *Ethics*, so the end of philosophy is that most excellent delight which does not suffer from any interruption or defect, that is to say, true happiness which is attained by the contemplation of the truth. And thus by considering all the causes and the constitution of this lady of mine, it may be perceived who now she is and why she is called Philosophy, and who is really and who is accidentally a philosopher.

But since in a certain exaltation of mind sometimes the feelings which are one boundary and the actuality which is the other are called indifferently by the name either of the actuality or of the feeling, as, for example, by Virgil when in the second book of the *Aeneid* he calls Aeneas 'O light', which was the actuality, and 'O hope of the Trojans', which is the feeling, for he was neither light nor hope but he was the starting-point from which came the light of counsel, and he was the soul on which all the hope of their safety rested; and by Statius when he says in the fifth book of the *Thebaid* where Hypsipyle speaks to Archemorus, 'O consolation of our estate and of our ruined country, O honour of my servile lot'; and by ourselves every day when we say in pointing to a friend, 'See my friendship,' or when a father says to a dear son, 'My love.' So too by long custom the

sciences to which philosophy looks with most fervent desire as her goal are called by her name, as, for instance, Natural science, Moral and Metaphysical, the last of which is called Philosophy, because Philosophy necessarily directs her gaze to that as her goal more than to any other science and with more fervent desire. Hence it may be perceived why the sciences are in a secondary sense called philosophy. Since we have seen how the Primary Philosophy which is that lady of whom I speak is genuine Philosophy in her essence, and how her noble name by custom is shared with the sciences, I will now proceed further with her praises.

XII. In the first chapter of this Tractate the cause which moved me to write this Canzone has been so fully discussed that there is no need for further discourse about it. Wherefore it may now easily enough be referred to that explanation of which I have spoken. I will therefore keep to the divisions already made, and will run lightly over its literal meaning by the aid of this explanation, turning the literal sense wherever it be necessary.

I say 'Love who discourseth to me in my mind'. By 'love' I mean the devotion which I applied to gain the love of this lady. Here we must know that devotion may be regarded as of two kinds, one kind is that devotion which leads a man to acquire the habit of any art or science, the other is that which when the habit is acquired sets to work to use it; and the first kind is that which I here call love, which instilled into my mind incessant, novel and most lofty reflections about this lady who has been the subject of demonstration above, such reflections as that devotion is wont to instil which sets about acquiring a friendship because it first revolves high thoughts of this friendship in

the desire for it. Such are the devotion and affection which in men are wont to precede the birth of friendship, when on one side love is already kindled and there is a desire and effort to kindle it on the other. For, as has been said above, philosophy comes into existence when the soul and wisdom are made friends, so that each is wholly loved by the other as in the fashion described above. Nor is it necessary for our present explanation any further to discuss this first stanza, which in the literal explanation has already been discussed by way of preamble, because the first method of explaining it enables the understanding to turn easily enough to this second.

Wherefore we may now go on to the second stanza which is the starting-point in our poetical treatment,<sup>n</sup> where I say, 'The sun who circleth round the whole world beholdeth not,' Here it should be known that as it is proper to treat of objects of sense for the sake of things which sense cannot perceive, so it is proper to treat of things intelligible for the sake of things which intellect cannot grasp. And, consequently, as in the literal explanation we begin with the material and sensible sun, so we must now apply our discourse to the spiritual and intellectual sun, that is, God. No object of sense in the whole world is more worthy to be made a type of God than the sun, which illumines first himself and then all other celestial and elemental bodies with sensible light. So God illumines with intellectual light first Himself and afterwards the dwellers in heaven and all other intellectual beings. The sun with his heat gives life to all things, and if anything is injured thereby this is no part of the intention of the cause but an accidental effect. So God imparts life to all things in His goodness, and if anything is made evil thereby, this is no part of the divine intention, but must

needs come to pass through some accident in the progress of the designed effect. For if God made the good angels and the bad, He did not make them both designedly, but only the good ; the wickedness of the bad followed afterwards apart from His design, though not so entirely apart from His design that God did not foreknow their wickedness. But so strongly was His affection set on bringing forth creatures endowed with spirit that His foreknowledge of some who must needs come to a bad end need not and should not have withheld God from their production ; for Nature would not be praiseworthy if, knowing in herself that a certain portion of the flowers of a tree were doomed to perish, she should bring forth no flowers on that tree, and on account of the barren should forgo the production of the fruitful. I say, therefore, that God who conceives everything (for His circling round means His conceiving) seeth naught so gentle as He seeth when He looks thither where this Philosophy abides ; for although God in beholding Himself sees all things collectively, yet so far as the distinction between things exists in Himself in the same way as effects exist in their cause, He sees them individually. He therefore sees this noblest of all things completely in so far as He sees her most perfectly in Himself and in His essence. For if we recall to memory what has been said above, Philosophy is a loving converse with wisdom, which is found in God most of all, since in Him dwell highest wisdom and highest love and highest actuality ; and it cannot exist elsewhere except in so far as it proceeds from Himself. Divine philosophy is therefore part of the divine essence because in Him there cannot be anything which is an adjunct to His essence ; and she is most noble because the noblest essence is that of the Godhead, and she exists in Him in

true and perfect fashion as if eternally wedded to Him. In the other intelligences she exists in less degree, almost as a mistress of whom no lover has complete enjoyment, but in her presence satisfies his fondness therewith. Wherefore it may be said that God 'seeth', that is, conceiveth naught, so gentle as this lady, I say 'naught' inasmuch as He sees and distinguishes all other things, as has been affirmed, seeing Himself to be the cause of all. O most noble and excellent heart which is intent upon the bride of the Emperor of heaven, and not bride alone but sister and most beloved daughter.

XIII. Having seen how in beginning the praises of this lady it is said with nicety that so far as she is primarily regarded she is part of the divine substance, we must go on and see how in the secondary sense we affirm that she is numbered among caused Intelligences. I say, therefore, 'every Intelligence on high gazeth on her,' where it should be known that I say 'on high' in bringing her into relation with God who has been mentioned above; and in this way we exclude those Intelligences which, as being exiled from their heavenly home, cannot give themselves to philosophy because love in them is entirely extinct, and for any one to be given to philosophy, as has been said already, love is indispensable. Wherefore it is plain that the infernal Intelligences are bereft of the presence of this most beautiful lady; and since she constitutes blessedness of the intellect, to be deprived of her is most bitter and full of all sadness.

Afterwards, when I say 'And that folk who on earth are enamoured', I come down to show how she also in her secondary aspect enters into man's understanding; and with this human philosophy I am here concerned throughout

this poetical treatment and am extolling that. I say, therefore, that the folk who are enamoured on earth, that is in this life, are sensible of her in their thoughts, not always, but when love imparts the feeling of her peace. Here must be noted three points which are referred to in my text. The first is suggested in the words, 'The folk who on earth are enamoured,' whereby a distinction seems to be made in human kind; and it must needs be made, for as plainly appears and will expressly be the theme of our discourse in the following Tractate, the largest part of mankind live in conformity with the senses rather than with the reason. And those who live conformably to the senses cannot possibly be enamoured of this lady, because they cannot have any apprehension of her. The second point is referred to in the words, 'When love bringeth feeling, &c.,' where a distinction of time seems to be made. With regard to this point, moreover, although the separate Intelligences constantly behold this lady, the intelligence of man cannot do so, since human nature apart from contemplation, with which the intellect and the reason are satisfied, has need of many things for its sustenance; wherefore our wisdom is at times merely a passive possession and not an actuality. And this is not the case with the other Intelligences in which the intellectual nature alone constitutes perfection. Therefore when our soul is not actively engaged in contemplation it cannot be accurately said that it is engaged in philosophy, except so far as it has the possession of philosophy and the capacity of waking it into activity; and therefore she sometimes dwells with the folk who are enamoured here and sometimes does not. The third point is suggested by the mention of the 'hour' when this folk is in her company, that is, when love gives the feeling of her peace, which

is as much as to say when a man is actually engaged in contemplation, since devotion alone cannot bring the feeling of the peace of this lady except by the act of contemplation. And thus we see how this lady primarily belongs to God, secondarily to all other separate Intelligences through constantly beholding her, and afterwards to man's intelligence through beholding her at intervals.

That man, however, who has this lady for his mistress is always to be called a philosopher notwithstanding that he is not always engaged in the final activity of philosophy, since persons for the most part are called after the habit rather than after the act. Wherefore we call one man virtuous not only for performing virtuous actions but for possessing the habit of virtue, and we call another eloquent, even when he is not speaking, on account of the habit of eloquence, that is, of speaking well. And on this philosophy, so far as she is shared by man's intelligence, the following commendation will now be passed to show how a great part of her excellence has been granted to human nature. I say then, in the next place, 'Her being so greatly pleaseth Him who bestoweth it on her,' for from Him as the primal source that being is derived which always attracts the capacity of our nature, and makes it fair and virtuous. Wherefore although some few attain to the habit of philosophy no one attains to it so fully that it can properly be called habit, since the first devotion, that is, the devotion by which the habit is engendered, cannot make her completely his own. And herein her highest praise may be seen, for whether perfect or imperfect she never forfeits her title to perfection. And on account of this her transcendency, it is said that the soul of philosophy 'doth make Him manifest in that which she bringeth with her', that is to



say, that God for ever imparts to her of His light. Here we must recall to memory what has been said above, namely, that love is the 'form' of philosophy, and therefore is here called her 'soul'. This love is manifest in the converse with wisdom, and this converse brings in its train wondrous beauties, that is to say, contentment in every temporal condition, and scorn for those things which others make lords' over them. Wherefore it comes to pass that the other poor wretches who behold this, bethinking themselves of their default, after longing for perfection fall into weariness of sighing; and this explains what the text says, that the eyes of those on whom she shines 'send messages thereof to the heart fraught with desires which come abroad and turn to sighs'.

XIV. As in the literal explanation we descend from the general praises to the particular, first praising her on the side of the soul, afterwards on the side of the body, so now my text purposes after bestowing general commendations to descend to particular. Wherefore, as has been said above, philosophy here has wisdom for her subject matter and love for her form, and for the combination of the one with the other the exercise of contemplation. Therefore in this verse which accordingly begins, 'Into her descendeth virtue divine,' I mean to extol love which is part of philosophy. Here we must know that the descent of virtue from one thing into another is nothing else than the reduction of the latter to her likeness; just as we see plainly in the case of natural agents, that where their virtue descends into things susceptible of them they bring the latter to a resemblance with themselves as far as they possibly can be brought. Thus we see that the sun, as his rays descend to earth,

subdues things to his own likeness as regards light, so far as their constitution enables them to receive light from his virtue. Thus I say that God subdues this love to His own likeness so far as it is possible by means of love to be assimilated to Him.

And the nature of this new creation is laid down by saying 'As He doth into an angel who beholdeth Him'. Here, furthermore, we should know that the first agent, that is, God, colours some things with His virtue as if by rays immediately directed on them, and other things as if by reflected splendour. Wherefore the divine light radiates into the Intelligences without any intermediary, into all other things it is reflected from those which are first illuminated. But since we have here made mention of 'light' and 'splendour', in order to be perfectly intelligible, I will point out the difference between these terms according to the opinion of Avicenna. I say that it is customary with philosophers to call the heaven 'light' so far as light is here in its original source; to call it 'radiance' in so far as it becomes the medium for conveying light from its source to the first substance by which it is arrested; to call it 'splendour' in so far as it is reflected on to some other region which is lit up. I say, therefore, that the divine virtue without any intermediary draws this love into a resemblance with itself. And this may be made manifest chiefly in this way, by saying that as the divine love is wholly eternal, so its object must of necessity be eternal, so that eternal things should be those which He loves. And thus He causes this love to love, for wisdom on which this love strikes is eternal. Wherefore it is written of her, 'From the beginning before the world was I created, and in the ages to come I shall not fail.' And in the *Proverbs* of Solomon the same wisdom

says 'I am ordained from everlasting'. And at the beginning of the *Gospel of John* her eternity may plainly be remarked. Hence it comes to pass that there where this love shines all other loves become darkened and almost extinguished, inasmuch as the eternal object of this love immeasurably outdoes and surpasses all other objects. And therefore the most eminent philosophers showed this clearly in their acts, by which we know that they have treated all other things save wisdom with indifference. Wherefore Democritus neglecting his own person left his beard and hair and nails uncut. Plato not caring for temporal goods treated kingly dignity with indifference, for he was the son of a king. Aristotle caring for no other friend contended against his truest friend save wisdom, as against Plato just mentioned. And why should we speak of these when we find that all the rest have been led by these thoughts to condemn their own lives, as Zeno, Socrates, Seneca, and many others? And moreover it is plain that divine virtue, like an angel, descends among men in the form of this love. And in order to impart experience of this the text afterwards explains, 'And let any gentle lady who believeth not this go with her and behold, &c.' By 'gentle lady' is meant the soul of inborn nobility, free and subject to her own authority, namely, reason. Wherefore all other souls cannot be called ladies but handmaids, since they do not exist for their own sake but for others; and the Philosopher in the second book of the *Metaphysics* affirms that that thing only is free which exists for its own sake and not for the sake of others.

The text says 'Let her go with her and behold her acts', that is, let her associate with this love, and behold that which she shall find within him. And in part the text treats of

this, saying, 'Here where she doth speak there cometh down'; that is, where philosophy exists in actuality there cometh down a heavenly thought, in which it is averred that she is more than any human activity. It says 'from heaven' in order that we may understand that not only philosophy but the thoughts that are friendly to her are withdrawn from low and earthly things.

Afterwards, in what follows, the text says how she enhances and kindles love wherever she shows herself in the suavity of her acts, namely, in all her traits which are comely, pleasant, and free from all excess. And afterwards in order the better to persuade her companions it says 'Gentle in every lady is all that in her is found, and beautiful in proportion as it resembleth her'. Further, it adds 'And it may be averred that her aspect helpeth', where we should know that the sight of this lady has been dispensed to us so bountifully not only through beholding her face which she shows to us, but through the longing to acquire the things which she keeps hidden from us. Wherefore, as she enables us to perceive by reason and inference much of that which but for her seems miraculous, so by her help we believe that every miracle may be accounted for in a more lofty understanding and consequently may exist. Whence our excellent faith has its origin, and from faith comes the hope that longs for things foreseen, and from hope springs the working of charity. And by these three virtues men rise to the pursuit of philosophy in that celestial Athens where Stoics and Peripatetics and Epicureans through skill in eternal truth unite harmoniously in a single will.

XV. In the preceding chapter this glorious lady is extolled for one of her component parts, namely, love: now

in this chapter in which I design to expound the stanza which begins 'Things in her aspect appear', we must needs comment upon it by extolling that other part of her, namely, wisdom. My text therefore says that 'Things in her aspect appear which reveal some of the joys of Paradise', and it points out the place where they appear, namely, her eyes and her smile. And here we must know that the eyes of wisdom are her demonstrations, by the aid of which truth is seen with fullest certainty; and her smiles are her persuasions in which the inner light of wisdom is shown forth under a kind of veil; and in them both is that noblest joy of blessedness which is the chief good of Paradise. This pleasure cannot be found in anything else here below, but only by looking into her eyes and her smile. And the reason is this: inasmuch as everything naturally desires its own perfection, unless it attains this it cannot be content, that is, blessed; for however abundantly a man might possess all other things, lacking perfection he would still feel a desire to which he could not be subject in a state of blessedness, since blessedness is something perfect, and desire is something defective, for no one desires that which he has, but that which he has not, which is plainly defect. And only by thus gazing is human perfection to be won, that is, perfection of reason on which all our being depends as on its chiefest constituent; and all our other functions, feeling, nutrition, and the rest, exist only for the sake of this, and this exists for its own sake alone and not for the sake of anything else. So that if reason is perfect, our essence is perfect to such a degree that a man, so far as he is a man, sees every desire brought to an end in her and so is blest. And, therefore, it is said in the book of *Wisdom*, 'Unhappy is he who casts away wisdom and learning,' for

this deprives men of happiness. From the possession of wisdom it follows that a man gains happiness and content, according to the opinion of the Philosopher. It is therefore seen how in her aspect there appear some of the things of Paradise; and therefore we read in the book of *Wisdom* just quoted, when it speaks of her, 'She is the brightness of the Eternal Light, the spotless mirror of the majesty of God.'

Afterwards, when it is said that 'by them is our intellect surpassed', I excuse myself by saying that I can speak little about them on account of their superiority. Here we must know that in some measure these things dazzle our intellect, so far as they confirm the existence of certain things which our intellect cannot behold, namely, God, eternity, and primal matter, which most certainly are perceived and with implicit faith believed to exist. And yet we cannot understand what they are except by denying things of them: in this way we may approach to a knowledge of them and not otherwise. Some one, indeed, may here gravely doubt how it can be that wisdom is able to make a man happy when it is not able to show him some things perfectly, inasmuch as man has a natural desire for knowledge, and without satisfying that desire cannot be blest. To this we may plainly answer that the natural desire in every case is proportionate to the possibility of attaining the object desired, otherwise desire would run counter to itself, which is impossible, and nature would have created it in vain, which also is impossible. Would run counter I say, for in desiring its own perfection it would desire its own imperfection, because it would desire always to go on desiring and never to satisfy its own desire. And the accursed miser falls into this mistake and does not recognize that he desires always to go on desiring, ever

pursuing after an amount which is always beyond his grasp. Nature would also have created the desire in vain because it would not have been adapted for a certain end ; and therefore man's desire of knowledge in this life is proportionate to the knowledge which can be acquired here ; and this limit is not transgressed except by a mistake which is no part of Nature's design. Thus in angelic natures also is desire proportionate, and as regards quantity is limited to that knowledge which the nature of each can apprehend. And this is the reason why the saints do not envy one another, because each attains to the goal of his own desire, and his desire is proportionate to the nature of the excellence at which it aims. Wherefore inasmuch as it is not possible for our nature to know what God is, and to pronounce with regard to certain things what they are, we do not naturally desire to have this knowledge, and thus our difficulty is resolved.

Afterwards, when I say that 'Her beauty raineth down flakes of fire', I come down to another joy of Paradise, that is, to that happiness which is secondary to this primal happiness, and is a consequence of her beauty. Here we must know that morality is the beauty of philosophy, for just as the beauty of the body follows from the proper disposition of the members, so the beauty of wisdom which is the body of philosophy, as has been said, follows from the disposition of the moral virtues which enable her to give pleasure perceptibly to the senses. And therefore I say that her beauty, that is, morality, 'raineth down flakes of fire,' that is, right desire, which is engendered by the pleasure conferred by moral teaching ; and this desire keeps us away even from natural vices, much more from all others. Hence arises that happiness which Aristotle defines in the first book of

the *Ethics* when he says that it consists in acting in accordance with virtue, in a life that is perfect.

And when my text adds 'Therefore let every lady who heareth her beauty', it goes on with her praises. I cry aloud to all mankind to follow her, telling them how she benefits them, that is, how by following her every one becomes good. Therefore it says 'whatever lady', that is, whatever soul, hears her beauty blamed for not appearing to be what it ought to appear, let her gaze on this pattern. Here we should know that the beauty of the soul consists in manners, that is to say, in the virtues most of all, which sometimes through vanity or pride are rendered less beautiful and less pleasing, as in the last Tractate we shall be able to see. And, therefore, in order to avoid this, I say that we should look on her, that is, on that in her wherein she is the pattern of humility, I mean on that part of her which is called moral philosophy; and I add that in gazing on that part of her (I mean of Wisdom) every depraved person will become upright and good. And therefore I say that 'it is she who maketh humble all the self-willed', that is, that she gently turns round all those who have been deflected from the right way.

Last of all, in highest praise of Wisdom, I say that she is the mother of all first principles, affirming that she was with God when in the beginning He made the world, and specially the movement of the heaven which engenders all things, whereby every other movement is originated and set going; adding, 'she was the thought of Him who set the Universe in motion'; I mean that she was in the divine thought, which is very intellect, when He made the world. Whence it follows that she made it; and therefore Solomon in the book of *Proverbs* says, speaking in the person of



Wisdom, ‘When God prepared the heavens, I was there, when He fenced the depths with a fixed law and a fixed circle, when He set fast the firmament above, when He hung aloft the fountains of the waters, when He encircled the sea with its boundary, and laid down a decree for the waters that they should not pass their borders, when He laid the foundations of the earth, I was with Him disposing all things, and I took my pleasure every day.’

Oh worse than dead, ye who shun the friendship of this lady! Open your eyes and perceive that before ye were made she loved you, arranging and ordering your progress, and after ye were made, in order to direct you aright, she came in your own likeness to you. And if ye cannot all come to behold her, honour her in the person of her friends, and follow their commandments, as the commands of those who announce to you the will of this eternal Empress. Shut not your ears against Solomon who enjoins this on you, saying that ‘the way of the just is like a shining light, which goes on and waxes until the day of blessedness’: go after them, ‘gaze on their actions, which ought to be to you a light on the road of this briefest life. And here we may bring to an end the true meaning of this present Canzone.

The last stanza, indeed, which is appended by way of *tornata*, can easily by means of the literal exposition be brought into agreement with this, save in so far as it says that I called this lady fierce and disdainful. Here it should be known that from the beginning Philosophy appeared to me cruel, so far as regards her body (that is Wisdom), for she did not smile on me, inasmuch as I did not yet understand her persuasions; and that she appeared to me disdainful, because she did not turn her eyes on me, that is to say,

I could not perceive her demonstrations. And the fault of all this lay at my door. And hereby, and by what has already been said in explaining the literal meaning, the allegorical sense of the *tornata* is clear : so that now, in order to make further progress, it is time to bring this Tractate to a close

# FOURTH TRACTATE

## SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

*Third Canzone.* This Canzone, which explains Dante's conception of nobility, is divided by him in the Commentary into two portions, the preface and the main argument. The preface which is contained in the first stanza has three members. In the first of these the poet states why he departs from his usual manner; in the second what he has to treat; and in the third he asks help of the Lord who dwells in his Lady's eyes, namely, Truth. The main portion has also three subdivisions. The first subdivision comprising the second, third, and fourth stanzas refers firstly to the Emperor's opinion, and secondly to that of others, including the common herd, who attach the greatest importance to birth and wealth. It is shown more particularly in the third stanza how riches cannot give or take away nobility, and in the fourth stanza how nobility cannot be due to birth. After dismissing these false opinions the poet in the second subdivision proceeds to lay down the true definition. This is comprised in the fifth and sixth and seventh stanzas. In the fifth stanza the poet adopts Aristotle's definition of virtue as the basis of his own. As nobility and virtue both imply good in their subject, and nobility is the wider term, virtue must come from nobility. In the sixth stanza this is further proved. No one, therefore, can claim nobility on the strength of birth; but the seed of felicity is sown by God in the soul which is receptive of it. The seventh stanza, which brings the second subdivision to a close, sets forth the effect of nobility on a man's character and conduct from the first stage of life to the close. The remaining verse of the Canzone contains the *tornata*, in which he sends his song to appear before his lady, and to say to her that the praises of her friend have been his theme.

COMMENTARY

(I) The love which the poet felt for his mistress makes him love the truth and hate falsehood. He therefore wishes above all things to lead men to entertain true and to reject false opinions about human goodness or nobility. This is the theme of the third Canzone; so that the Commentary in the present Tractate has not, as in the two preceding, to expound an allegory, but to give a fuller explanation of the literal meaning of the poem. (II) He then explains the three divisions of the Preface in detail, noting specially the importance of awaiting the right time; (III) and proceeds to divide the remainder of the Canzone into its three main parts, subdividing the first part into its two members. He then gives the definition of nobility by the Emperor Frederick II, as ancestral wealth and fine manners. (IV) The mention of the Emperor leads him to consider at length the nature of the Imperial authority, its origin, and necessity. The Roman Empire was the seat of this authority. (V) The action of Divine Providence is shown in the rise and progress of the Roman Empire, wherein Christ was born, and in the conduct of her citizens. (VI) Next, the authority due to general opinion must be considered. After discussing the derivation and meaning of the word 'authority', he attributes the highest authority to Aristotle the master and leader of opinion. He then considers the opinion of various schools, Epicureans, Peripatetics, and Academics, and shows that the opinion of the great philosopher does not conflict with the Imperial authority, but that both philosopher and emperor are needed to constitute the highest authority. (VII) The defects of popular opinion arise from disregard of proper guidance. Those who go astray for this reason are most vile, just as a man would be most vile who strayed from the path on which he had the footsteps of others to guide him. The Canzone speaks of such an one as 'dead while he liveth'. (VIII) Nothing here said is inconsistent with due reverence, which is one of the fruits of discernment.

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In rejecting common opinion the poet is appealing from the judgement of sense to that of reason ; and in rejecting the opinion of the Emperor, he is not irreverent, for Imperial authority does not extend to the domain of reason. (IX) In order to define the Imperial authority activities are divided into those which are purely natural, and those which are subject to reason and will. Activities with which reason is concerned are subdivided into four classes. That activity which derives its character solely from the act of the will is most completely in our own power ; and, generally speaking, responsibility is proportionate to the power exercised by the will. Law is intended to be a guide to the will. Action, moreover, may be compared with art, i.e. production. Many matters of production are purely technical, and in these art is absolutely supreme. But in other matters art is limited by the laws of its subject matter. In the same way the Emperor's power is limited by the law of reason and of nature. We have here to render to God what is God's. The definition of nobility is a matter of this kind. (X) He now proceeds with the criticism of previous opinions, including that of the Emperor. So far as definitions of nobility make fine manners essential to it they are right, though defective. But their authors are mistaken in introducing the notion of time, or of wealth. The philosophical arguments against making nobility dependent on wealth are first considered ; (XI) and the inferiority of wealth is attributed to three special imperfections, lack of discrimination in its advent, dangers attendant on its increase, and disasters consequent on its possession. After dwelling on the first of these, (XII) he proceeds to show that the increase of riches is itself evil, because it brings the torment of boundless and therefore futile desire. Those who would meet this argument by saying that the increase of knowledge also brings the desire of further knowledge, overlook the essential difference between these two kinds of desire. (XIII) The desire of riches is uniform and keeps growing, and is therefore never consummated ; the desire of knowledge is made up of desires which are successively consummated. Moreover, as has been

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said, riches are disastrous to their possessor because they both inflict positive evil, and deprive him of good. (XIV) The poet then returns to the error which makes nobility depend on time by defining it to consist in ancestral wealth. In going backwards we must arrive at a primitive ancestor who could neither be ignoble or noble, because there was no one before him ; and if he were ignoble or noble he would for ever fix the quality of his descendants. It might be contended that nobility began when low birth was forgotten ; but oblivion cannot be made the cause of nobility without falling into absurdities of three kinds. In the first place a feeble memory, which is a bad thing, would be the cause of nobility, which is good and the cause of good. Secondly, none of the lower animals or of inanimate objects could be termed mean or noble. Thirdly, the thing engendered, viz. nobility, would often be recognized to exist before its cause (viz. oblivion) came into operation. (XV) The remainder of the fourth stanza is explained, and it is further shown to be impossible for those who believe that there is one original ancestor, namely, Adam, to hold oblivion of ancestors to be the cause of nobility. The heathen also refer man's origin to a single beginning. The error in question is manifest to sound minds, as the Canzone says. Minds are sound when they are not hampered by evil dispositions, which are described with reference both to the mind and to the body. (XVI) The true definition has now to be examined. The meaning of nobility is first explained : it signifies in each thing the perfection of the nature peculiar to it. The word is derived from *non vile*. The quality will be defined by its fruits, viz. the moral and intellectual virtues. (XVII) The moral virtues are in a special sense our fruits, being entirely in our own power. The definition of moral virtue and the classification of the moral virtues laid down by Aristotle are to be accepted ; as also his definition of happiness, as an activity in accordance with virtue in a perfect life. We have two kinds of happiness, moral and intellectual, of which the latter is the higher, as Christ teaches us by the words He addressed to Martha. (XVIII) Right choice is

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characteristic both of nobility and of virtue. One of these must therefore come from the other, or both from a third. The more comprehensive of the two terms must be taken as the original source of the characteristic. (XIX) This proof is further established by showing that nobility is a wider term than virtue, including other kinds of excellence, as the sixth stanza of the Canzone affirms, and may be seen in the qualities of women and youths. (XX) Thus nobility enters into the conception of virtue, and is something divine. But the soul must be adapted to receive the divine gift. Nobility is therefore a seed of blessedness placed by God in the soul prepared to receive it. (XXI) Nobility descends into men by agencies both natural and spiritual. Natural agencies including the influence of the generating soul, the heaven, and the combined elements prepare the material to receive the formative virtue which comes from the generating soul; and this in turn prepares it for the heavenly virtue from which life comes. The mover of the heaven imparts the potential intellect, in which are potentially the Universal forms which come from the Primal intelligence. According to the goodness of the various agencies the soul is more or less pure; and in proportion to its purity the divine excellence multiplies in the intellectual virtue, and becomes the seed of happiness. Divine agencies impart the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit, but man is responsible for the cultivation of the seed. (XXII) With Aristotle we may say that all creatures begin by loving themselves. This is at first an indiscriminate desire, but afterwards desires become discriminated. Rational desires belonging to the mind, i.e. the will and intellect, are the highest and bring the purest happiness. Men who have not this desire by nature can engraft it on their souls. Scripture teaches this doctrine figuratively. (XXIII) The poet now goes on to explain the seventh stanza, and shows how nobility displays itself in the different stages of life. Human life is like an arch rising to its highest point and declining. The highest point is about the thirty-fifth year. This is illustrated by the life of the Saviour. The four ages in man correspond to the

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divisions of the year and the day. (XXIV-XXVIII) The graces that belong to the four ages are then further defined and illustrated in detail, and various passages from classical writings are allegorically explained. (XXIX) The objection of those who urge that a family may properly be called noble is met by showing that, though a worthless person cannot arrogate to himself the nobility of his ancestors, a family may be called noble if the majority of its members are truly noble. (XXX) The last chapter deals with the *tornata*. The Canzone is directed to address herself only to those who are wise or have some love of wisdom, namely, philosophy. Nobility, of whom the Canzone speaks, is the friend of her who dwells in the inmost recess of the divine mind, namely, Philosophy or Wisdom.



# FOURTH TRACTATE

## CANZONE

*Le dolci rime d'amor ch' io solia.*

THE dulcet rimes of love, which I was wont to seek within my thoughts, 'tis meet that I forgo, not because I hope not to return to them again, but because the scornful and fierce ways which in my lady are displayed have barred for me the path of my wonted speech. And since it seemeth to me time to pause, I will lay aside my smooth style which I have maintained where love was my theme, and I will speak of worth, by which a man is truly gentle; with rime harsh and subtle refuting the false and mean judgement of those who deem that nobility hath riches for its source. And in the outset I call on that Lord who dwelleth in my lady's eyes, whereby she is enamoured of herself.

There was an Emperor who deemed that nobility, according to his thinking, consisted in possession of ancestral wealth coupled with manners fine. And some one else there was of slighter wisdom who pondered again this saying, and took the last part away, perhaps because he had it not. In his wake follow all those who deem a man gentle by reason of his stock, which long hath been possessed of great riches: and so ingrained hath become this false opinion among us that a man calleth him noble who can say 'I was grandson or son of such a man of worth', though he himself be good for naught. But meanest of all to him who regardeth truth

appeareth the man who hath known the right way and afterwards falleth from it, and is like to one who while he doth walk the earth is dead.

He who defineth man as matter animate saith first what is not true, and after speaking falsely doth not say the whole. But farther perchance he saw not. Likewise he who held the reins of Empire in definition went astray, since firstly he layeth down what is false, and on the other hand proceedeth defectively; for riches cannot, as men believe, either give or take away nobility, because in their nature they are mean. Moreover he who paints the shape of aught, if he cannot be the thing, cannot depict it; nor can an upright tower be inclined by a stream which runneth far off. It doth appear that riches are mean and imperfect; for, however high heaped up, they cannot give rest, but bring more care. Wherefore the mind which is upright and true doth not discompose itself because they flee away.

Nor do these allow that a base-born man may become gentle, nor that from a base-born sire may descend any offspring that ever is deemed gentle; this is by them confessed. Whence it is plain that their reasoning stumbleth, in so far as it allotteth time as essential for nobility, defining by help of time. Moreover it followeth from what I have set down before that we are all gentle or base, or else that man had no beginning. But to that I assent not; and they likewise assent not if they are Christians. Wherefore to sound intellects 'tis plain that their sayings are empty; and I therefore reprove them as false, and withdraw myself from them. And now I will speak just as I feel, and say what nobility is and whence it springeth. And I will tell the marks which the man who is gentle doth retain.

I affirm that every virtue primarily cometh from one root,

virtue, I mean, which maketh a man happy in all his doing. This root (as the *Ethics* affirm) is a habit of choice, which resideth only in the mean; and such words the book setteth down. I say that nobility by its conception ever importeth good of its subject, as baseness ever importeth ill. And virtue above defined ever giveth men good thoughts concerning her. Wherefore, with the same predicate both of two things agree, which are of one effect; whence it needs must follow that the one thing cometh of the other, or each from some third. But if the one holdeth good of all of which the other holdeth good and of yet more, from that rather will this latter come. And let that which I have here affirmed be taken for granted.

Wherever virtue is, there is nobility. But virtue is not always there where nobility is; as there is sky wherever there is a star, but there is not always a star wherever there is sky. So we in woman and in those of tender age perceive this healthfulness, so far as they are held quick to shame, which yet from virtue is diverse. Therefore as perse from black so from nobility will each several virtue come, or the genus thereof which I have set down above. Therefore let no man boast himself, saying, 'By race am I her fellow.' For they are wellnigh gods, they who have this grace apart from all sinners. For God alone endoweth that soul with it, whom He seeth in her own person stand perfect, so that with some few the seed of happiness doth join company, dispatched by God to the soul that is happily placed.

The soul whom this goodness doth adorn keepeth it not to herself close hid. For from the first, when to the body she is espoused, she displayeth it until death. Obedient, suave, and quick to shame is she in life's first stage, and with beauty doth her person ornament, with all its parts

well strung ; in youth temperate and brave, full of love and of courteous praise, and taketh pleasure only in loyalty. In her old age she is prudent and just and famed for bounteousness, and within herself she doth joy to hear and speak of others' excellence. Afterwards in the fourth stage of life she is married again, to God, and contemplateth the end which awaiteth her, and blesseth the times gone by. See now how many be they that are deceived.

Against the erring shouldst thou go forth, my song ; and when thou shalt have come into that region where our Lady dwelleth, keep not thy mission hid from her. Thou mayest say to her full surely, ' I go discoursing of thy friend.'

I. Love, as we learn from the concordant opinion of the wise who discourse on it, and as we see by constant experience, is that which joins and unites the lover with the person loved. Whence Pythagoras says that 'friendship makes the many one'. And because things that are joined together do naturally interchange their qualities insomuch that at times the one is entirely transformed into the nature of the other, it comes to pass that the feelings of the person loved enter into the person who loves, so that the love felt by the one is communicated to the other ; and the same holds true of hatred and desire and every other feeling. Wherefore the friends of the one are loved by the other, and the enemies hated. Hence the Greek proverb says that 'between friends all things ought to be common'. Thus I, having become the friend of the Lady mentioned above in the true explanation, began to love and hate in accordance with her love and hatred. I began, therefore, to love the followers of truth, and to hate the followers of error and falsehood, as she does.

But since in itself everything is lovable, and nothing is hateful, unless some wickedness be imported into it, it is reasonable and decorous to hate not things themselves but the wickedness of things, and to try to keep clear of that. And if any one strives to act thus, my most excellent Lady strives most of all ; strives, I mean, to separate the wickedness of things, which causes them to be hated, from the things themselves ; because in her all reason dwells, and in her is rectitude as in its source. I who follow her in action as well as in feeling, so far as I may, was wont to loathe and dispraise the errors of mankind, not in order to defame or abuse those who err, but their errors ; which I thought to make displeasing by blaming them, and when made displeasing to put away from those who on account of them had become hateful to me.

Among these errors there was one which I censured most of all ; and because it is not only hurtful and dangerous to those who are set fast in it but also to those who censure it, I put it away from them and condemn it. This is the error about the part of nature in sowing in us that human goodness, which ought to be called Nobility ; an error which through evil custom or lack of intelligence was so confirmed that the opinion of almost every one had been misled concerning it. And from this fallacious opinion sprang fallacious judgements ; and from fallacious judgements undue reverence or contempt, whereby the good were held in disesteem as vile, and the bad honoured and exalted. Which thing was the worst confusion in the world, as any one may perceive who nicely considers what the consequences of it may be. And inasmuch as this my Lady had somewhat estranged from me that sweet aspect of hers (especially in those features on which I gazed when I sought to know

whether the primal matter of the elements was thought by God) for which reason I for a time forebore to resort to her presence : and sojourning in her absence as it were, I entered in thought upon the contemplation of the shortcomings to which men are liable with regard to the error above mentioned. And in order to avoid idleness, which is the chief enemy of this Lady, and to extinguish this error which robs her of so many friends, I determined to call aloud to those who were walking on this wrong road, in order that they might be directed into the right path ; and I began a Canzone opening with the words, ‘ The dulcet rimes of love which I was wont.’ In this Canzone I propose to bring men back into the right path concerning the proper recognition of true nobility, as may be perceived on making acquaintance with the text which I now propose to explain. And since in this Canzone we are endeavouring to find so needful a remedy, it was not well to employ any figure of speech ; but to prepare this medicine in the speediest way, in order that health might speedily be restored, for where that was undermined, men were hastening to so hideous a death. It will not therefore be necessary in expounding the Canzone to unveil any allegory but merely to discourse on the literal meaning. By my ‘ Lady ’ I mean always that Lady of whom I have discoursed in the preceding Canzone, namely that most efficacious light of Philosophy, whose rays cause the flowers to bloom again, and to bear fruit in the true nobility of men. This is the theme which the Canzone prefixed designs fully to treat.

II. At the outset of the explanation now undertaken, in order that the meaning of the Canzone prefixed may be the better understood, it is meet first to divide this into two

portions : for in the first part the language is prefatory, in the second the treatment of the subject is pursued. And the second part begins with the opening of the second stanza at the words 'There was an Emperor who deemed'.

The first part, moreover, may be all included under three divisions. The first division gives the reason why I diverge from my accustomed speech, in the second I say what I intend to handle, in the third I ask help of that which can best help me, namely, the truth. The second member begins 'And since it seems to me time to pause'. The third begins 'And in the outset I call on that Lord'.

I say that 'it is meet for me to forgo the dulcet rimes of love which my thoughts were wont to seek'; and I assign the reason when I say that this is not done with the intent never to rime of love again, but because in my Lady new traits have shown themselves which for the present have deprived me of material for speaking of love. Here it must be known that the ways of this Lady are not scornful and fierce, save only in appearance, as may be seen in the tenth chapter of the preceding Tractate : just as elsewhere I say that the appearance was at variance with the reality. And how it can be that one and the same thing is sweet and appears bitter, or is clear and appears obscure, may here be sufficiently perceived.

Afterwards, when I say 'And since it seemeth to me time to pause', I mention, as has been said, the theme of which I mean to treat. And here we must not pass dryshod over what I imply in saying 'time to pause', since this is the most decisive reason of my enterprise ; but we must see how reasonable it is that we should wait for the right time in all our undertakings, and most of all in speech. Time, as

Aristotle says in the fourth book of the *Physics*, is succession of movement regarded as prior and posterior, and is that succession of movement in the heavens by which all things here below are so ordered as to have some form impressed on them: for in spring the earth is conditioned after one fashion for receiving the forms of herbs and flowers, and after another fashion in winter; and one season of the year is conditioned to receive the seed differently from another. And thus our mind, in so far as it is dependent on the complexion of the body, which is bound to follow the rotation of the heaven, is not conditioned at one time in the same way as another. Wherefore much discretion should be shown in adopting or rejecting words, which are, as it were, the seed of activity, both in order that they may become fruitful when they are properly received, and in order that on their part there may be no defect of barrenness. We must therefore ascertain beforehand, the right time both for him who is speaking, and for him who has to listen; for if the speaker is in the wrong mood, his words more often than not are harmful; and if the hearer is in the wrong mood, even good words are taken amiss. And therefore Solomon in the book of *Ecclesiastes* says that 'there is a time to speak, and a time to keep silent'. Wherefore, feeling in myself for the reason stated in the preceding chapter that my mood was too much perturbed to speak of love, it seemed to me that the right time should be awaited which brings with itself the consummation of every desire, and presents itself as a benefactor to him who is not impatient of waiting. Hence holy Apostle James says in his Epistle, in the fifth chapter, 'Lo, the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the ground, patiently enduring until he receives the early and the late.' For almost all our troubles, if we will carefully inquire into



their sources, come from not knowing how to avail ourselves of the right time.

I say that since it seems good to me to wait, I shall 'lay aside', that is, leave alone, 'my smooth style,' that is, the smooth style to which I have kept in speaking of love; and I say that I will speak of that 'worth' which makes a man 'truly gentle'. And although 'worth' may be understood in many different ways, here it is taken for a natural faculty, or an excellence conferred by nature, as will be seen below. And I promise to treat of this matter with rime 'subtle and harsh'. Wherefore it should be known that rime may be taken in two senses, that is, in a wide and in a narrow sense. In a narrow sense it means the agreement which is usually observed between the last and penultimate syllables of one line with those of another; in a wide sense it means all speech that being ruled by measure and time falls into rhythmical consonance; and here in this preface rime is taken and understood in this wider sense. And the preface therefore says 'harsh', referring to the sound of what is dictated, which in such weighty subject matter ought not to be smooth: and it says 'subtle', referring to the meaning of the words which go on subtly arguing and disputing.

And I add 'Refuting the false and mean judgement', wherein I promise further to refute the judgement of persons who are full of error; 'false', that is, remote from truth; 'mean,' that is, confirmed and strengthened by meanness of mind. And this is to be remarked, namely, that in this preface we promise first to deal with the truth, and afterwards to refute what is false, but in the poetical treatment we do the contrary; for we first refute what is false, and afterwards deal with the truth, which seems not to agree with our promise. And therefore we must know that

although we intend to do both, we intend specially to deal with the truth ; and we intend to refute what is false only so far as the truth is thereby made more manifest. And we here promise first to deal with the truth as being our main object, which inspires the mind of the listener with the desire to hear ; while in the poetical treatment what is false is first refuted, in order that when wrong notions have been put to flight, the truth may afterwards be more freely received. And this is the method pursued by the Master of human reason, Aristotle, who always contended first against the adversaries of the truth, and afterwards, when these had been refuted, demonstrated the truth.

Last of all, when I say, ‘And in the outset I call on that Lord,’ I call on Truth to bear me company, who is the Lord that dwells in the eyes, that is, in the demonstrations of Philosophy. And truly is she ‘Lord’, for the soul that is fitted for her reception is ‘Lady’, and if not so fitted is a slave deprived of all liberty.

And the preface says ‘whereby she is enamoured of herself’, because Philosophy, which (as is affirmed in the preceding Tractate) is a ‘loving intercourse with wisdom’ beholds herself, when the beauty of her own eyes becomes apparent to her. And what is this but to say that the philosophic mind not only contemplates the truth, but further contemplates that contemplation itself, and its beauty, turning back to gaze upon herself, and becoming enamoured of herself by reason of the beauty of her former gaze ? And so ends that which the text of the present poem conveys in three members by way of introduction.

III. Now that the meaning of the Preface has been reviewed the poetical treatment must follow : and in order

the better to exhibit this it is meet to divide it into its main parts, which are three. For in the first part, nobility is treated according to the opinions of others ; in the second, according to the true opinion ; in the third the language is turned to the Canzone itself, in order to add some ornament to what has been said. The second part begins ‘ I say that every virtue primarily’. The third begins ‘ Against the erring shouldst thou go forth, my song’. And after these general divisions it is meet to make other subdivisions in order to grasp rightly the conception which we design to set forth. Therefore let no one be surprised if many subdivisions are made as we go on, because the enterprise at present in hand is great and lofty, and one into which authorities have made little investigation ; and the Tractate on which I am now entering must needs be long and subtle if we are to disentangle the text perfectly, in accordance with the meaning which it conveys.

I say then that this first part now falls into two subdivisions ; for in the first the opinions of others are laid down, and are refuted in the second ; and this second subdivision begins ‘ He who defines man as matter animate’.

Moreover, that which now remains as the first part has two members. The former is the Emperor’s definition, the latter is the opinion of the common people which deviates from it, and is void of all reason. This second member begins ‘ And some one else there was of slighter wisdom’. I affirm, therefore, ‘ that there was an Emperor,’ that is to say, some one who exercised the imperial authority. Now we must know that Frederick of Suabia, the last Emperor of the Romans (last, I mean, up to the present time, notwithstanding that Rodolph, and Adolph, and Albert were elected after the death of Frederick and his descendants), when

asked what nobility was, replied that it was 'ancestral wealth and fine manners'. And I say that 'there was some one else of slighter wisdom' who, pondering and thinking over this definition in all its aspects, struck out the last portion, namely, 'fine manners,' and retained the first, namely, 'ancestral wealth'. And as the text seems to suggest, 'because perhaps he had not fine manners,' he did not wish to forfeit his title to nobility, and defined it by the condition which suited himself, viz. 'possession of ancestral wealth.' And I affirm that almost all hold this opinion, when I say that 'In his wake follow' all those who deem a man 'gentle' because he belongs to a stock that has long been wealthy, inasmuch as almost all give tongue to this effect.

These two opinions (although one of them, as has been said, may be altogether disregarded), seem to have two very weighty reasons to support them. The first is expressed in the saying of the Philosopher that 'what appears true to all cannot be altogether false'; the second is the most excellent authority of the imperial majesty. And in order that the force of truth which outweighs all authority may hereafter be all the more clearly seen, I desire to discuss how far each of these two considerations is helpful and valid. And in the first place nothing can be known about the imperial authority until its roots are found. These we must deal with expressly in a special chapter.

IV. The root and ground of the imperial majesty is, in truth, the necessity of man's social state, which is ordained for a single end, namely, a life of happiness; to which no one is able to attain by himself without the aid of some one else, inasmuch as man has need of many things for which a single individual cannot suffice. And therefore the

Philosopher says that man is by nature a 'companionable animal'. And just as an individual in order to suffice for himself requires the domestic companionship of the family, so a household to suffice for itself requires a neighbourhood, else it will suffer from many defects which will be hindrances to happiness. And because a single neighbourhood cannot in all respects be self-sufficient, in order to satisfy all its wants there must needs be a city. Moreover a city, for the sake of its crafts and for self-defence, must needs have intercourse and brotherly relations with the neighbouring townships, and for this reason kingdoms were constituted. Wherefore, inasmuch as the mind of man does not rest content with a limited possession of land, but always desires to acquire more land, as we perceive by experience, disagreement and wars must needs arise between kingdom and kingdom. Such things are the scourges of townships, and through townships of neighbourhoods, and through neighbourhoods of families, and through families of individuals, and thus happiness is hindered. Wherefore, in order to do away with these wars and their causes, it is necessary that the whole earth, and all that is given to the race of man to possess, should be a monarchy, that is to say, a single principedom; and should have a single prince, who, possessing everything, and having nothing left to desire, should keep kings confined within the borders of their kingdoms, so that peace should reign between them, and townships should rest in peace, and while they so rest neighbourhoods should love each other, and in this mutual love families should satisfy all their wants; and when these are satisfied, a man should live happily, which is the end for which he is born. And to these conceptions the words of the Philosopher may be referred when he says in the *Politics* that, when many things

are ordained for a single end, one of these should regulate or rule the rest, and all the rest should be regulated and ruled by it ; just as we see in a ship that the different offices and purposes of the ship are ordained for a single end, namely, for gaining the desired harbour by a prosperous course. And on a ship, as each officer directs his own activity to its own end, so there is one officer who takes account of all these ends and directs them to the final end of all ; and this is the captain, whose voice all ought to obey. We see an example of this in religious brotherhoods and in armies, and in everything which, as has been said, is adapted to some end. Wherefore we may see plainly that in order to make the universal brotherhood of the human species perfect, there must needs be one captain, as it were, who, studying the different conditions of the world, and arranging the various necessary offices, should have a universal and incontestable office of command over the whole. And this office is called Empire in the full sense without any addition, because it is the command of all other offices of command. And thus he who is appointed to this command is called Emperor, because he is the commander of all other commands ; and what he says is law for all, and ought to be obeyed by all, and every other command derives strength and authority from his. And thus it is manifest that the Imperial majesty and authority is the highest in the fellowship of mankind.

Some one, indeed, may quibble and say that although the Imperial office is requisite for the world, this is no proof that reason requires us to lodge that supreme authority in the hands of the Roman Prince, which is the point to be proved ; because the power of Rome was acquired neither by reason nor by universal agreement, but by force, which appears to be the opposite of reason. To this it is easy to

reply that the choice of this highest officer must needs primarily emanate from that wisdom which provides for all men, namely, God ; otherwise the choice would not have been made impartially for all, inasmuch as before the officer above named there was no one who paid heed to the good of all. And because no nature ever was or will be gentler in bearing rule, or stronger in upholding, or keener in acquiring it than that of the Latin race (as may be perceived by experience), and most of all that of the sacred people which had an admixture of the lofty blood of Troy, this people was chosen by God for this office. Therefore, inasmuch as this office could not be attained without the greatest virtue, and as the greatest and most humane kindliness was required for its exercise, that was the people best adapted for it. Hence the mean by which the Roman people primarily became possessed of this office was not force, but divine Providence which is higher than all reason. And Virgil in the first book of the *Aeneid* agrees with this when speaking in the person of God he says ‘To them’ (namely, the Romans) ‘I assign no bounds of possessions or of time, to them have I given empire without end’. Force, therefore, was not the moving cause, as the objector thought, but was the instrumental cause, as the blows of the hammer are the cause of a knife, while the mind of the smith is the efficient and moving cause ; and thus not force but reason, and that, moreover, divine reason, has been the source of the Roman Empire. And that this is so may be seen by two of the plainest reasons which prove that city to be imperial, and to have its origin specially from God and to proceed specially from God. But since this topic cannot be handled in this chapter without making it too long, and long chapters are the enemies of memory, I will add

another chapter to my digression, by setting forth the reasons indicated above, which will not be so treated without profit and much enjoyment.

V. It is no wonder if divine Providence which utterly transcends the apprehension of angels and of men, often proceeds incomprehensibly to us, inasmuch as human actions often hide their tendencies from men themselves. We should rather marvel greatly if at any time the process by which the eternal counsels are fulfilled is so manifest as to be discerned by our reason. And therefore at the outset of this chapter I may speak with the lips of Solomon who through the person of Wisdom says in his *Proverbs* 'Hearken because I have to speak of great things'.

When the infinite goodness of God desired to bring back into conformity with itself the human creature, who through the sin of the first man's transgression had been separated from God and had lost His likeness, it was decreed in that loftiest and most united divine consistory of the Trinity that the Son of God should descend to earth in order to bring about this conformity. And since at His coming into the world it was meet that not only the Heaven but the Earth should be in their best frame, and Earth is in her best frame when she is a monarchy, that is, when the whole earth has one Prince, as has been said above, divine Providence ordained the people and the city which should fulfil this condition, namely, glorious Rome. And since it was meet that the lodging into which the King of Heaven was to enter should be most clean and pure, a most holy family was ordained from which, after many good deserts, there should be born a woman far better than all the rest of mankind to become the abode of the Son of God. And this family is the family



of David of which was born the pride and honour of the human race, namely, Mary. Therefore it is written in Isaiah, 'a rod shall grow out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall spring from its root.' Now Jesse was the father of the aforesaid David. And all this, the birth of David, and the birth of Rome, happened at the same juncture, namely, at the coming of Aeneas from Troy into Italy, which was the origin of the most renowned city of Rome, as the records testify. Thus the divine choice of the Roman empire is sufficiently proved by the birth of the holy city which was contemporaneous with the root of the family of Mary. And it may be noted incidentally that since this heaven began to revolve it has never been in a better frame than when He who has created and governs it descended from above, as the mathematicians are still able by virtue of their arts to discover for us. Nor ever was the world, nor ever will it be, so perfectly ordered as at the time when it was ordered in obedience to the voice of one single prince and commander of the Roman people, as Luke the Evangelist testifies. Therefore universal peace reigned everywhere, which never was before nor shall be again, for the ship of human society was speeding over a smooth track to its destined port. O inexpressible and incomprehensible wisdom of God, who at the same hour both yonder in Syria and here in Italy madest Thy preparations for Thy coming. And O ye most vile and silly brutes pasturing under the semblances of men who presume to speak against our faith, and fain would know, as ye spin and delve, what God with so much foresight has ordained. Accursed be ye and your presumption and all those who give heed to you.

And as has been said above at the end of the preceding chapter, God was the author not only of the special birth of

Rome, but of her special progress ; for starting in brief from Romulus who was her first parent until the age of her highest perfection, that is to the time of her Emperor aforesaid, her progress went on by means of divine as well as of human agencies. For if we consider the seven kings who first governed her, Romulus, Numa, Tullus, Ancus, and the royal Tarquins who were, as we may say, the foster-fathers and tutors of her childhood, we may ascertain from the records of Roman history, especially from Titus Livius, that these were men of different natures such as were opportune to time in its onward course. If we consider next her earlier youth after she was emancipated from the tutelage of the kings by Brutus the first consul until the days of Caesar the first supreme Prince, we shall find that she was exalted not with human but with godlike citizens, who in loving her were inspired not with human love, but with divine. And that could not and should not have been except for some special end designed by God when He gave her so large an infusion of heaven. And who will say that Fabricius was under no divine inspiration when he refused an almost boundless heap of gold because he would not forsake his country? or Curius, whom the Samnites endeavoured to corrupt, when he refused a huge quantity of gold for love of his country, saying that the citizens of Rome wished to possess not gold but the owners of gold? Or Mucius when he set fire to his own hand because the blow which he had devised for the liberation of Rome had missed its mark? Who will say that Torquatus, when he sentenced his own son to death, could have endured to do so without divine assistance? And Brutus aforesaid in like manner? Who will affirm this of the Decii and Drusi who laid down their lives for their country? Who will say of captive Regulus, who

was dispatched from Carthage to Rome in order to exchange the captured Carthaginians for himself and the other Roman prisoners, that he was swayed only by human nature when for love of Rome he gave advice to his own hurt after the envoys of Carthage had withdrawn? Who will say of Quinctius Cincinnatus, who had been taken from the plough to be made dictator, that when the time of his office had expired he gave it up and returned to the plough merely of his own accord? Who will say of Camillus that after being banished and driven into exile he returned to free Rome from her enemies, and that, after freeing her (for fear of offending against the authority of the senate), he went back into exile merely of his own accord, without the divine prompting? O most hallowed breast of Cato, who shall presume to speak of thee? Surely we cannot speak of thee better than by silence and by following Jerome's example, who in his preface to the Bible, in that passage where he refers to Paul, says that it is better to be silent than to say too little. Surely it should be manifest to us, when we recall the lives of these and all the other godlike citizens, that such wonderful deeds were not done without some light from the divine goodness over and above their own natural goodness. And it ought to be manifest that these most eminent men were the instruments by which divine Providence wrought in the Roman Empire, wherein oft-times the arm of God appeared to be present. And did not God put His own hand to the battle in which the men of Alba at the outset fought with the Romans for the headship of the empire, when a single Roman held in his hand the liberties of Rome? Did not God put His own hand to the task when the Franks, after taking the whole of Rome, endeavoured to seize the Capitol by stealth, and only the cry of a goose

made it known? And did not God put His own hand to the task when in the war of Hannibal the Romans, after losing so many citizens that three bushels of rings were carried to Carthage, were for abandoning their country if that blest Scipio, then a young man, had not undertaken the descent on Africa by his own hardihood. And did not God put His own hand to the task when a new citizen of small estate, namely, Tullius, defended the liberty of Rome against so great a citizen as Catiline? Yes, certainly. Wherefore we ought not to demand further proof in order to perceive that the birth and growth of that holy city were specially purposed and ordained by God. And I certainly have a firm belief that the stones of her walls are worthy of reverence, and that the soil on which she is seated is worthy beyond all that men have proclaimed or proved.

VI. Above in the third chapter of this Tractate a promise was given to set forth the dignity of imperial and of philosophic authority. And on this account since we have spoken of imperial, my digression must go on to consider philosophic authority, in keeping with the promise made. And here we must first consider what the word authority means; because it is more necessary to know this in discoursing of philosophic than in discoursing of imperial authority, for the latter by reason of its majesty does not seem to raise any question.

It must therefore be known that authority is nothing else than the activity proper to an author. This word (namely, *auctor*, without its third letter *c*) may be derived from two sources. The one is a verb, which has generally dropped out of use in Latin, and signifies much the same as the tying of words together, viz. AEIOU. And if any one carefully

considers the verb in the first person present, he will see plainly that the word itself declares its own meaning, for it is made up solely of the ties of words, that is, of the five vowels alone, which are, as it were, the soul and tie of every word. And it is composed of these by the method of transposition, so as to present the likeness of a tie. For beginning with A it turns back to U, and then proceeds straight through I to E; thence it turns back and reverts to O, so that in truth the vowels shape themselves into this figure AIEOU, which is the figure of a tie. And so far as the word 'author' comes and is derived from the verb AUIEO, it is applied only to poets who have tied their words together with the art of the muse; and at present we are not referring to this meaning.

The other source from which 'author' is derived, as Uguccione testifies in the beginning of his book on *Derivations*, is a Greek word pronounced *autentin*, which in Latin is equivalent to 'worthy of trust and obedience'. And thus 'author', which is derived from this word, is used for any person who deserves to be trusted and obeyed. And from 'author' comes the word of which we are now treating, namely, 'authority'; whence it can be seen that authority is that activity to which trust and obedience are due.

It is manifest that Aristotle is most worthy of trust and obedience: and that his words are the supreme and highest authority may thus be proved. Among workmen and artificers engaged in different arts and operations which are subordinated to some one final art or operation, the artificer or workman in that final art chiefly deserves to be obeyed and trusted by all, as being the man who alone considers the final end of all other ends. Hence the horseman ought to be trusted by the sword maker, the bridle maker, the saddler,

and the armourer, and all callings which are subordinated to the art of the horseman. And because all human activities require a single end, namely, the end of human life for which man is ordained so far as he is man, the master and artificer who shows us this end and devotes himself to it ought to be most of all obeyed and trusted ; and this master is Aristotle. He, therefore, is most worthy of trust and obedience. And in order to perceive why Aristotle is the master and leader of human reason, so far as it is directed to its final activity, we must needs recognize that this our end which each one naturally desires was in the most ancient times investigated by the help of the wise. And since those who desire this end are so numerous, and desires are almost all individually diverse, although taken as a whole their end is one, it was very difficult to discriminate this single end in which every human desire should straightway find repose.

There were then philosophers of very ancient date, the first and chief of whom was Zeno. These perceived and believed that this end of human life was nothing else than strict rectitude ; that is to say, that it consisted in following truth and justice strictly without ever looking aside, in never showing sorrow for anything or joy for anything, in never being sensitive to any emotion. And they defined rectitude as 'that which apart from utility or profit is praiseworthy in itself on the ground of reason'. And they and their sect were called Stoics ; and to them belonged that glorious Cato, of whom I did not venture to speak above.

Other philosophers there were whose views and beliefs were different from theirs ; and of these the foremost and chief was a philosopher named Epicurus who, seeing that every living creature as soon as it is born is as it were directed by nature to its destined end, fleeing pain and craving

pleasure, affirmed that this our end was pleasure (*voluptas* with the letter *p*, not *voluntas*), that is, delight free from pain. And therefore he did not allow any mean between delight and pain, saying that pleasure was nothing else than the absence of pain, as Tully seems to recount of him in the first book *On the End of Goods*. And to these who after Epicurus were called Epicureans belonged Torquatus, a noble Roman, a descendant from the blood of the renowned Torquatus, of whom I made mention above.

Others there were who owe their origin to Socrates, and after him to his successor Plato, who, taking a more exact survey and perceiving that in all our activities men may and do go astray by doing too much or too little, affirmed that our activity when free from excess and defect and conformable to the mean adopted by our own choice, in other words, virtue, is that end of which we are at present discoursing. And this they termed 'acting with virtue'. These were called *Academics*, such as were Plato and his nephew Speusippus, so named from the place in which Plato studied, I mean the *Academy*. And no school derived its name from Socrates, because in his philosophy no positive statement was made.

Aristotle, indeed, who was surnamed the Stagirite, and his companion Xenocrates of Chalcedon, through the god-like genius which nature had implanted in Aristotle, coming to know this end by much the same method as that of Socrates and the Academics, gave the finishing touch to moral philosophy and brought it to perfection, but especially Aristotle. And since Aristotle began the practice of disputing as he walked backwards and forwards, they (Aristotle, that is, and his followers) were named *Peripatetics*, which means 'men who walk to and fro'. And since Moral Philosophy

was brought to the farthest limit of perfection by Aristotle, the name Academics was eclipsed, and all who attached themselves to this sect were called *Peripatetics*. This school at the present day holds the sceptre of the world in teaching everywhere, and their doctrine may almost be called ‘Catholic opinion’. Thus it may be seen that Aristotle was the guide and conductor of the world to this goal, and this is what we desired to show.

Wherefore, to sum up, our main point is made clear, namely, that the authority of the chief philosopher with which we are concerned is in full strength and vigour. And it is not opposed to the imperial authority; but the latter without the former is precarious, and the former without the latter is weak, not in itself, but through the insubordination of the world, so that the two when conjoined are most serviceable, and in full strength and vigour. And therefore it is written in the book of *Wisdom*, ‘Love the light of Wisdom, all ye who go before the people,’ which is as much as to say, let Philosophic be combined with Imperial authority for good and perfect government. O wretched men who at present bear rule; and O most wretched men who are subject to rule! For no philosophical authority is combined with your forms of government, whether by means of your own studies or by good advice; so that to all of you these words of the *Preacher* may be applied, ‘Woe to thee O land whose King is a child, and whose princes eat in the morning’; and to no country could the words which follow be applied: ‘Blessed is the land whose King is noble, and whose princes eat in due season, for their necessity and not for wantonness.’ Pay heed, ye enemies of God, to your own flanks, ye who have seized the rods of the governments of Italy, I say to you Charles and Frederick who are kings, and to you, other



princes and tyrants, and beware who sits beside you to give counsel, and reckon how many times a day your counsellors point out to you this end of human life. Better would it be for you to fly low like swallows than like the kite to wheel high aloft over vilest things.

VII. Since we have seen what reverence is to be paid to Imperial and to Philosophic authority, both of which seem to support the opinions above stated, we must now return to the straight path of our intended course. I say then that this last opinion has been so ingrained in the common herd that without regard to anything else, and without searching for any reason, every one is called 'gentle' who is son or grandson of some man of worth though he himself be good for naught. And this is the part which says, 'And so ingrained hath become this false opinion among us that a man calleth him noble who can say "I was son or grandson of such a man of worth", though he himself should be good for naught.' Wherefore we must remark that it is most perilous carelessness to allow a wrong opinion to gain a footing. For just as grass spreads in an untilled field, and out-tops and covers the ears of corn, so that on a distant view the corn is lost to sight, and the crop is finally destroyed; in the same way a wrong opinion when not chastened and corrected grows and spreads in the mind, so that the ears of reason, that is, of right opinion, are hidden, and as it were buried and lost. O how great an enterprise have I undertaken in this Canzone, in desiring "to weed such an overgrown field as that of popular opinion, so long left destitute of such tillage. Certainly I do not intend to clear the whole field, but only those parts in which the ears of reason are not altogether overlaid; that is to say, I intend to set those

right whose good disposition has kept alive some glimmer of reason, for the rest deserve no more care than the brutes ; for it appears to me as great a miracle to recall any one to reason when it is quite extinct, as to restore to life one who has lain four days in the tomb.

After the evil state of popular opinion has been described, on a sudden the text, breaking all order in reproof, smites it as though it were something horrible with the words, ‘ But meanest of all to one who regardeth truth appeareth,’ in order to signify its intolerable wickedness by affirming that these are the worst liars ; for not only is a man mean, that is to say, ignoble, who is wicked though descended from the good, but is even meanest ; and I draw an illustration from one who leaves a path that has been shown him. To make this clear, I must put a question and answer it in this wise. Suppose a plain with certain fields and paths, with hedges, ditches, stones, timber, and almost every kind of obstacle outside the narrow footways. And suppose snow to have fallen so deeply that it covers everything, and makes all parts look alike so that no vestige of a path is to be seen. Some one comes from the country on one side and wishes to go to a dwelling on the other side, and by his own efforts, that is by his perception and quickness of wit, with no guide but himself, he goes by the straight road thither whither he intends to go, leaving the traces of his footsteps behind him. Another comes after him, and wishes to go to the same dwelling, and needs only to follow the footprints that are left behind ; yet he, though he has been shown the way which the other without any showing has managed to find for himself, by his own fault wanders from it, and rambles among the briers and rubbish, and does not go in the direction in which he ought to have gone. Which of these ought to

be called a man of worth? I answer, 'he who went first.' And what should we call the second man? I answer, 'vilest.' Why should he not be merely called 'a man of no worth', that is, 'vile'? I answer because a man might be called of no worth or vile, who, not having any guidance, had missed the track; but because this man had guidance, his error and fault could not be heightened, and therefore he is to be called not merely vile, but vilest. And so he who is of noble stock through his father or any of his ancestors, if he does not persevere in nobleness is not only vile but vilest, and deserves more contempt and reproach than any churl. And in order that a man may keep himself from this lowest depth of vileness, Solomon in the twenty-second chapter of the *Proverbs* enjoins on him who has had a man of worth for his ancestor, 'Thou shalt not transgress the ancient bounds which thy fathers have set,' and he says before in the fourth chapter of the said book, 'The way of the just,' that is, of the man of worth, 'goeth forth as a shining light, and the way of the wicked is dark, and they know not to what ruin they go.' Last of all, when it is said, 'And is like to one who while he walks the earth is dead,' I say to the greater reproach of this vilest man that he is dead, though seeming to be alive. Herein we should know that the wicked man may truly be said to be dead, and most of all that man who departs from the way of his good ancestor. And this may be demonstrated as follows. Aristotle says in the second book of his treatise *On the Soul* that life is the essence of the living: and since life exists in various forms (as, for instance, in plants it is growth, in animals growth and sensation, in men growth, sensation, movement, and reasoning or thinking), and things ought to receive their name from their noblest part; it is manifest that in animals (I mean the brutes) life is sensation,

and in man life is the use of reason. Hence if life be the essence of man, then for a man to part with this use of reason is the same as to part with his essence, and this is the same as to be dead. And does not a man part with the use of reason when he does not reason on the aim of his life? and does not a man part with the use of reason when he does not reason on the path which he ought to take? Certainly he does. And this is most apparent in one who has foot-prints before him and does not regard them. Hence Solomon says in the fifth chapter of the *Proverbs*, 'He shall die who hath not had instruction, and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray,' that is to say, 'He shall die who maketh not himself a disciple, and followeth not the master'; and he is vilest. And some one might say of such an one, 'How is it that he is dead and walks the earth?' I answer that he is dead as man, but survives as beast. For as the Philosopher says in the second book *Of the Soul*, the faculties of the soul stand one above the other, as the figure of the quadrangle stands above that of the triangle, and the pentagon above the quadrangle; so the life of sensation stands above that of growth, and that of the intellect above that of sensation. Therefore, just as when we take away the last side of a pentagon, what is left is a quadrangle, but no longer a pentagon; so when we remove the last faculty of the soul, that is, reason, what is left is no longer a man, but only a thing with a sensitive soul, that is to say, a brute animal. And this is the meaning of the second stanza of the Canzone in hand in which the opinions of others are laid down.

VIII. The fairest branch that springs from the root of reason is discernment. For as Thomas says, touching the

Prologue to the *Ethics*, ‘To know the co-ordination of one thing with another is a special act of the reason, and this act is discernment.’ One of the fairest and sweetest fruits of this branch is the reverence which the lesser owes to the greater. Whence Tully, in the first book *On the Offices*, speaking of the beauty which shines on the face of rectitude, says that reverence is a part of this beauty. And just as reverence is one of the beauties of rectitude, so its contrary defiles and detracts from virtue; and this contrary quality may be called in our vulgar tongue irreverence or insolence. And therefore Tully says in the same passage that ‘To be heedless of knowing what others think of us, is the mark of one who is not only arrogant but dissolute’; which is as much as to say that arrogance and dissoluteness are the lack of that self-knowledge which supplies the measure of all reverence. Therefore since I wish (be it said with all reverence to the Prince and to the Philosopher) to rid certain persons’ minds of frowardness that I may afterwards set up therein the light of truth; before proceeding to refute the opinions stated above, I will show how in refuting them my discourse is not irreverent towards the Imperial Majesty or the Philosopher. For to have shown irreverence would not have been so uncomely a fault in any part of this book as in this Tractate, in which I ought, as I am treating of nobility, to show myself noble and not clownish. And first I will show that I do not presume against the authority of the Philosopher; afterwards I will show that I do not presume against the Imperial Majesty.

I affirm then, that, when the Philosopher says that ‘what appears true to the majority cannot be wholly false’, he does not intend to speak of outer impressions, namely, those of the senses, but of inner impressions, namely, those of the

reason ; inasmuch as the impressions of sense are oft-times utterly false, especially where objects common to more than one sense are concerned, wherein sense is very often deceived. Thus we know that to most people the sun appears to be a foot wide in diameter ; and this is so utterly false that, according to the investigation and discovery made by human reason with the aid of her attendant arts, the diameter of the sun's body is five times that of the earth's, and a half besides. For whereas the earth has a diameter of six thousand, five hundred miles, the diameter of the sun, which, measured by sensual impressions seems to be a foot in extent, is thirty-five thousand, seven hundred and fifty miles. Whereby it is plain that Aristotle did not refer to sensuous impressions. Therefore, if in my refutation I aim only at refuting sensuous impressions, I do not oppose the contention of the Philosopher ; and therefore I do not offend against the reverence which is due to him. And that I intend to disprove the truth of sensuous impressions is plain, for they who pass these judgements, judge only by what their senses tell them about the things which fortune can give or take away. For when they see these things lead to high connexions and marriages, to wonderful buildings, large estates, and great lordships, they believe them to be the causes of nobility, nay, they believe them to be of the essence of nobility. Whereas, if such men judged by rational impressions, they would say the contrary, namely, that nobility is the cause of these things, as will be seen later on in this Tractate. •

And just as I, as may be seen, say nothing inconsistent with the reverence due to the Philosopher when I refute this opinion, so I say nothing inconsistent with the reverence due to the Empire. The reason of this I propose to show.

But because a discourse is held in the presence of an opponent, the trained speaker ought to use much precaution in his speech, in order that the opponent may not derive from it material for confusing the truth. I, who in this *Tractate* speak in the face of such formidable opponents, cannot make my speech short. So let no one be surprised if my digressions are long. I say then, in order to prove that I am not irreverent to the majesty of the Empire, that we must first see what constitutes Reverence. I affirm that Reverence is nothing else than the acknowledgement by manifest signs of a subjection that is due. And this being recognized, I wish to distinguish between one who is irreverent, and one who is not-reverent. 'Irreverent' is a privative, 'not-reverent' is a negative term. Irreverence therefore consists in disowning by manifest signs a subjection that is due; absence of reverence consists in withholding a subjection that is not due. A man may refuse assent to anything in two ways. He can refuse assent in one way, thereby offending against the truth, when it is deprived of the confession due to it, and this is properly disowning; he can refuse assent in another way, without offending against the truth, when he abstains from admitting that which is not the fact, and this is properly denial; as, when a man refuses to acknowledge that he is altogether mortal, this, properly speaking, is denial. If, therefore, I withhold reverence to the Empire, I am not irreverent, but only not-reverent. This is not contrary to reverence, inasmuch as it does not offend against it, just as absence of life does not offend against life, but death, which is the privation of life, offends against it. For death is one thing, and lifelessness is another, for lifelessness is an attribute of stones. And since death implies privation, which cannot take place except in those things

of which life is an attribute, and life is not an attribute of stones, for this reason stones ought not to be called ~~dead~~ but lifeless. In the same way I, who in this instance am not bound to show reverence to the Empire, if I deny it reverence am not irreverent, though I am not-reverent; and this is not insolence or anything blameable. But it would be insolence to be reverent, if reverence it could be called, since any one would thus fall into more serious and real irreverence, that is to say, irreverence for truth and nature, as will be seen below. That master of Philosophers, Aristotle, guarded himself against this fault in the beginning of the *Ethics*, when he says, 'If we have two friends, and one of these is truth, we must agree with truth.' However, since I have affirmed that I am not-reverent, which implies the denial of reverence, that is, the denial by manifest signs of a subjection that is not due, we must see how this is denial and not disowning; that is, we must see how in this instance I am not in duty bound to be a subject of the Imperial Majesty. And because the explanation must needs be lengthy, I purpose to demonstrate this forthwith in a special chapter.

IX. In order to see how in this contingency, that is to say, in rejecting or approving the Emperor's opinion, I am not bound to be in subjection to him, I must needs recall to mind what has been stated above concerning the Imperial authority in the fourth chapter of this *Tractate*: namely, that the Imperial authority was invented for the perfecting of human life, and that this authority is rightly entrusted with the regulation and direction of all our activities, because the Imperial Majesty has jurisdiction as far as ever our activities extend, and beyond these limits it does not stretch.



But just as every art and office of man is restricted within certain bounds by that of the Emperor, so this Empire is by God restricted within certain bounds ; and we ought not to wonder at this, because we see the function and the art of Nature limited in all its activities. For if we wish to take Nature in the sense of the universal nature of everything, it has jurisdiction co-extensive with the whole world, I mean with the heaven and the earth : and this world exists within certain limits as is proved in the third book of the *Physics*, and by the first book *On Heaven and the World*. The jurisdiction of universal nature is therefore limited within certain bounds, and consequently the particular nature likewise ; and the power which sets bounds to Nature is He who is limited by nothing, that is, the primal goodness which is God, who alone by His infinite capacity comprehends the infinite.

And in order to perceive the limits of our activities, we must know that those activities only are ours, which are subject to reason and to will ; for though we have in us a digestive activity, this is not distinctively human, but natural. And we must know that our reason has relation to activities of four kinds, which are to be regarded differently. Some activities reason merely reflects upon, but does not create, nor can she create any of them. Such are things natural, and supernatural, and mathematical. Other activities reason reflects upon, and creates by her own exertion ; these are called rational, as, for instance, the arts of speech. Others again reason reflects upon, and creates in matter external to herself, and such are the mechanical arts. And all these activities, although it depends on our own will to reflect on them, are not in themselves dependent on our will. For though we might will that heavy bodies should have a natural

tendency to mount upwards, they could not mount upwards ; and though we might will that a syllogism with false premises should establish a true conclusion, it would not establish it ; and though we might will that a house should be as firmly based when leaning as when upright, it would not be so ; because of these activities we are not, properly speaking, creators but discoverers. Another ordained them, and a greater creator created them. There are also activities upon which our reason reflects in the very exertion of the will, as, for instance, the giving offence or pleasure, standing firm or fleeing in battle, keeping chaste, or wantoning. These are wholly subject to our will ; and therefore from them we are called good or bad, because they are wholly our own. Wherefore so far as our will can prevail, so far does our own activity extend. And inasmuch as in all these voluntary activities, there is a certain equity to be preserved, and a certain breach of equity to be avoided ; and this equity may be destroyed for two reasons, either through not knowing what it is, or through not wishing to follow it, written Law was invented in order both to demonstrate and to prescribe it. Hence Augustine says that ‘ If men had known it (namely, equity), and had upheld it when known, there would have been no need of written Law ’. Therefore in the beginning of the Old Digest it is set down that ‘ Written Law is the art of well-doing and of equity ’. For writing down, declaring, and enforcing this Law, that officer of whom we are speaking, viz. the Emperor, has been appointed, and to him we are subject so far as the activities proper to man of which we have spoken are concerned, but not any further. For the like reason, in every art and in every calling the workmen and the apprentices are subject to the master and chief of such arts. Outside the limits of these

the subjection comes to an end, because the mastery comes to an end. So that if we wish to describe the office of the Emperor by an image, we may say that he is the rider of the human will. How this steed careers over the plain without his rider is obvious enough, especially in this wretched Italy, which has been left to govern herself without any intermediary.

We must also consider that the more distinctive of the art or rule anything is, so much the more complete is the subjection; for effects are intensified in proportion to their causes. Hence we must know that there are some things which are so entirely matters of art that Nature becomes the instrument of the art; as for instance, rowing with an oar, where the art makes the propulsion, which is a natural movement, its instrument; or, as in the threshing of corn, . . . leaven, where the art makes heat, which is a natural quality, its instrument.<sup>n</sup> And in the use of this instrument most of all ought we to submit ourselves to the chieftain and master of the art. And there are things in which the art is the instrument of Nature, and these are arts in a minor degree; and in these the workmen are not so completely subject to their chief, as in the giving of the seed to the earth. Here we must wait upon the will of Nature, as, for instance, in leaving harbour, for in this we have to wait upon the natural disposition of the weather. And therefore in such matters we often see disputes arise among the workmen, and the superior asking advice of the inferior. Other things there are which do not pertain to the art but appear to have some relationship with it; and hence men are often deceived. In these matters the learners are not subject to the artificer or master, nor are they bound to submit to him in the province of their particular art; as,

for instance, fishing appears to have some relationship with navigation, and the knowledge of the virtues of herbs appears to have some relationship with agriculture. But these are not regulated in common, inasmuch as fishing falls under the art of venery and is subject to its direction, and the knowledge of the virtues of herbs falls under medicine or some nobler branch of learning.

In like manner those statements we have made with regard to the other arts may be seen to hold good of the art of empire. For in the art of empire there are certain matters which are purely technical, as, for instance, the laws of marriage, of slavery, of military service, of succession to rank. In all these matters we are entirely subject to the Emperor without any doubt or question. There are other laws which are, as it were, the satellites of Nature, such as that which constitutes a man of ripe age for administration; and in these we are not entirely subject to the Emperor. There are many other matters which appear to have some relationship with the art of empire; and here it is, and always was, a mistake for any one to believe that the imperial decision in this department is authoritative. Such a matter is the season of youth, regarding which no consent to any imperial authority is required by virtue of the office of Emperor; therefore let that which is God's be rendered to God. Hence we need not submit or assent to the Emperor Nero, when he said that youth was beauty and strength of body; but to him who said that youth was the culmination of the natural life, that is, to the philosopher. And therefore it is plain that the definition of nobility is not within the scope of the imperial art; and if this is not within the scope of that art, in treating of nobility we are not subject to the Emperor; and if we are not subject to him, we are not

bound to reverence him in this matter ; and this is also that conclusion which we were seeking. Wherefore now with full licence and with all boldness of mind we may charge full front at depraved opinions, and throw them on the ground, in order that by reason of this victory of mine the true opinion may hold the field in the minds of those for whose interest it is that this light should be powerful.

X. Now that the opinions of others have been set down, and it has been shown that I am free to refute them, I will proceed to discuss that part of the *Canzone* which refutes them. This begins, 'He who defines man as matter animate.' Nevertheless, we must know that the opinion of the Emperor (although his statement of it is defective) did in one particular, I mean where he speaks of 'fine manners', apply to the manners that belong to nobility. This portion of his opinion, therefore, I do not intend to refute. The other particular which is altogether foreign to the nature of nobility, I propose to refute. This, when it speaks of ancestral wealth, appears to imply two things, viz. time and wealth, which are altogether foreign to nobility, as has been said, and as will be demonstrated below. Accordingly, in the refutation two divisions are made : first, it is proved that wealth, afterwards that time is not the cause of nobility. The second division begins, 'Nor do they allow that a base-born man may become gentle.'

And we must know that when wealth has been rejected not only is the opinion of the Emperor refuted in part, so far as it refers to wealth, but also the opinion of the common herd, which was based solely on wealth, is refuted as a whole. There are two parts in the first division. In the former it is said generally that the Emperor was mistaken in his definition

of nobility. In the latter the reason why he was mistaken is shown. ‘And riches cannot as men believe.’

I say, therefore, ‘he who defineth man as matter animate says first what is not true,’ that is, what is false, so far as he speaks of ‘matter’; ‘and after speaking falsely saith not the whole,’ that is to say, he speaks defectively, in so far as he says ‘animate’ without adding ‘rational’, which is the differentia that distinguishes man from the brutes. Afterwards I say that ‘he who held the reins of empire’ was mistaken in definition; and I do not say ‘Emperor’ but ‘he who held the reins of empire’, in order, as was said above, to show that the decision of this matter is not within the scope of the Imperial office. Afterwards I say that he ‘likewise went astray’ because he wrongly assumed ‘ancestral wealth’ as the subject matter of nobility, and afterwards went on to adopt a defective form, or differentia, viz. ‘fine manners,’ which do not comprise all that constitutes the form of nobility but only a very small part, as will be shown below. And we must not omit to notice, although the text is silent on this point, that my lord the Emperor in this matter not only went wrong in the details of the definition, but also in his method of defining (for all that he was, as fame proclaims him, a great logician and clerk): for the definition of nobility would be more properly derived from its effects than from its sources; inasmuch as nobility appears itself to be of the nature of a source, which cannot be explained by what is prior, but by what is posterior to it. Afterwards, when I say that ‘riches cannot as men believe’, I show how they cannot be the cause of nobility, because they are vile; and I show how they cannot take it away, because they are quite distinct from nobility. And I prove that they are vile by one of their greatest and most manifest

defects ; and this I do when I say ‘ It doth appear that riches are vile, &c.’ Last of all, I conclude in virtue of what has been said above that their transformation does not carry with it any change in the upright mind ; which proves, as has been said above, that they are distinct from nobility, because the effect of conjunction does not follow. Here we must know that, as the Philosopher contends, all things which produce something else must needs first, in that essence of theirs, completely be that thing. Wherefore he says in the seventh book of the *Metaphysics*, that ‘ whenever anything is engendered by something else, it is engendered of this latter by existing in its essence’. Moreover, it should be known that everything which decays, decays thus because of some antecedent alteration ; and everything which is altered must needs be conjoined with the alteration, as the Philosopher has it in the seventh book of the *Physics*, and the first book *On Generation*. After propounding these things, I go on to say that riches cannot, as men believe, confer nobility ; and in order to show that they are more completely distinct from it, I say that they cannot take it away from him who possesses it. ‘ They cannot give it’, inasmuch as they are naturally vile, and on account of their vileness are contrary to nobility. And here vileness is meant to be equivalent to degeneration, which is the opposite of nobility ; inasmuch as one contrary does not and cannot produce the other contrary for the reason stated above. This reason is briefly inserted in the text in the words, ‘ Moreover he who painteth the shape of aught, if he cannot be the thing, cannot depict it.’ Hence no painter could delineate any figure, unless he first made himself in thought such as the figure is to be. Moreover ‘ they cannot take it away’ because they are far remote from nobility ; and

therefore I add, 'Nor can an upright tower be inclined by a stream that runneth far off,' which is not intended to say anything new, but to correspond with that which is said before, namely, that riches cannot take away nobility, affirming that this nobility is like 'an upright tower', and that riches are like 'a stream that runneth far off'.

XI. It now remains only to show how riches are vile, and how they are distinct and remote from nobility; and this is shown in two short passages of the text, to which we must now turn. Afterwards, when these have been expounded, what has been affirmed will be plain, viz. that riches are vile and remote from nobility. By this means the arguments previously advanced against riches will be fully established.

I say then, 'It doth appear that riches are vile and imperfect.' And in order to make plain that which I mean to affirm, it must be known that the vileness of a thing is due to its imperfection, and likewise its nobility to its perfection, so that the more perfect a thing is, the nobler it is in its nature; and the more imperfect, the more vile. Hence if riches are imperfect it is plain that they are vile. And that they are imperfect is briefly proved by the text when it says, 'For however high heaped up they cannot give rest, but bring more care.' Whereby it is plain not only that they are imperfect, but that their state is most imperfect, and therefore that they are most vile. And this Lucan testifies when in addressing riches he says, 'Without a struggle perished the laws; and ye riches, the vilest part of things, stirred up the fight.' In short, their imperfection may be seen undisguisedly in three things, firstly, in the lack of discrimination shown by their advent; secondly, in the danger attendant on their increase; thirdly, in the ruin



consequent on their possession. And before I demonstrate this, a doubt which seems to arise must be cleared up : for inasmuch as gold and pearls are completely possessed of form and actuality in their own essence, it does not seem true to affirm that they are imperfect. And therefore it should be understood that, so far as concerns riches considered in themselves, they are perfect things, and are not riches, but gold, or pearls. But so far as they are adapted for the possession of man they are riches, and in this sense they are full of imperfection, since it is not inconsistent for one and the same thing to be both perfect and imperfect, when regarded from different points of view.

I say that their imperfection may be noted firstly in the lack of discrimination shown in their advent, in which no distributive justice is conspicuous, but almost always unalloyed injustice, and this injustice is the peculiar effect of imperfection. For if the ways in which riches come are considered, they may all be summed up under three heads. They either come purely by fortune, as, for instance, when they come without design or expectation by some unthought of chance-finding ; or they come by fortune seconded by reason, as when they come by testament or by succession in turn ; or they come by fortune seconding reason, as when they come by lawful or unlawful gains. I call gain lawful when riches are earned by skill or commerce or service ; I call it unlawful when they are acquired by theft or rapine. And in riches that come in any of these three ways that injustice of which I speak is discernible ; for buried riches which are discovered or rediscovered present themselves more frequently to the bad than to the good, and this is so obvious that it does not need proof. Indeed, I have seen the spot in the side of a mountain in Tuscany named Falterona, where

the meanest peasant of all the country-side, when digging, found more than a bushel of Santelenas of the finest silver, which had been waiting for him perhaps a thousand years or more. And from remarking this injustice Aristotle said that 'the more a man is subject to intellect, the less he is subject to fortune.' And I assert that inheritances devolve by bequest or succession on the wicked more often than on the good; and of this I am not minded to bring forward any evidence; but let each cast a glance on his own neighbourhood, and he will see that which I keep to myself in order not to speak invidiously of any one. Would that it had been the good pleasure of God that what the Provençal asked had come to pass, so that 'he who does not inherit the goodness, should forfeit the inheritance of the wealth'. And I say that gain is just that which more often falls to the bad than to the good: for unlawful gain never falls to the good, because they reject it. What good man indeed would ever draw profit from force or fraud? That would be an impossibility; for if he merely willed an unlawful undertaking, he would cease to be good. And lawful gain rarely comes to the good; for since much anxious thought is required for it, and the good generally bestow anxious thought on more important matters, they are seldom anxious enough for it. Wherefore it is plain that those riches in whatever way they come, come unjustly; and therefore our Lord called riches unrighteous when He said, 'make to yourselves friends of the money of unrighteousness,' thus inviting and encouraging men to liberal acts of kindness which are the progenitors of friends. And what a good exchange does he make who gives of these most imperfect things in order to acquire and possess things that are perfect, such as are the hearts of men of worth. This exchange can be made every

day. Truly this kind of traffic is different from all others, for when a man thinks to buy one person by kindness, thousands and thousands are bought by it. And who to this day does not keep a place for Alexander in his heart on account of his royal acts of kindness? In whose heart to this day lives not the good King of Castile, or Saladin, or the good Marquis of Monferrato, or the good Count of Toulouse, or Bertram de Born, or Galeazzo of Montefeltro when mention is made of their liberal gifts? Certainly not only those who would willingly do the same, but even those who would sooner die than do the same cherish affection for the memory of these.

XII. As has been said, the imperfection of riches may be remarked not only in the lack of discrimination shown in their advent, but also in the danger attendant on their increase: and since more of their deficiencies may be seen in the latter, the text makes mention only of that, saying that 'however high heaped up they cannot soothe, but bring more thirst', and make men more defective and less self-sufficing. And here we should recognize that things which are defective may cover their deficiencies in such a fashion that they do not appear on the surface, but the imperfection is disguised under the mask of perfection; or they may carry their deficiencies in such fashion that the imperfection is undisguisedly shown on the surface. And those things which do not show their deficiencies at first sight are more dangerous; since very often we cannot be on our guard against them; as we see in the case of a traitor, who on the surface displays himself before us as a friend, so that he makes us put confidence in him, and under the mask of friendship he hides the defect of enmity. In this way riches are dangerously imperfect in their increase, for while they

hold out to us what they promise, they bring the contrary upon us. These false traitresses ever promise that, if amassed in a certain quantity, they will fill him who amasses them full of every satisfaction ; and by this promise they lead the will of man to the vice of avarice. And for this reason Boethius in his book *On Consolation* calls them dangerous, saying, ‘ Ah me ! who was it that first dug up the masses of hidden gold and the stones that desired to be hid, precious dangers.’ These false traitresses promise if any one rightly regards them, that they will take away all thirst and all deficiency, and will bring satiety and sufficiency. And this they hold out to every man at the outset, guaranteeing the fulfilment of this promise when they have increased up to a certain measure ; and after they are amassed to that extent, in place of satiety and refreshment, they produce and set up feverish and intolerable thirst within the breast ; and instead of satisfying a man, they set before him a fresh goal, that is to say, a greater amount to be desired, and, coupled with this, fear and anxiety for what is already gained ; so that in truth ‘ they cannot give rest, but bring more care’, which before, in their absence, was not felt. And therefore Tully, in his book *On the Paradox*, when denouncing riches says, ‘ Never at any time have I full surely affirmed that either the money of such men or their stately mansions, or their riches, or their lordships, or the enjoyments to which they are most addicted, are among things good and desirable ; inasmuch as I have certainly seen men who abound in all these things most eagerly craving the very things in which they abound. For never at any time is the thirst of cupidity satisfied or appeased ; nor are men tormented merely by the desire of adding to the things which they possess, but they are also tormented by the fear of losing them.’ These words

are all Tully's, and stand thus in the above-mentioned book. And here is a more important testimony to this imperfection, namely, Boethius, when he says in that work of his *On Consolation*, 'If the goddess of riches should bestow them in quantity as the sand which is rolled onwards by the troubled sea, or in number as the stars which give shine, yet the race of man would not cease to wail.' And since further testimony is needed to reduce this to demonstration, let us pass by all that Solomon and his father cry against them, all that Seneca, especially in his letters to Lucilius, all that Horace, all that Juvenal, and, in a word, all that every writer and every poet, all that truthful Holy Writ exclaim against these false harlots, full of all defects; and in order that we may have ocular proof let us turn our attention merely to the life of those who go in pursuit of them, and see how little anxious are the lives of men when they have amassed them, how satisfied, how restful they are! And what else daily endangers and kills cities, country-sides, and individuals so much as the fresh accumulation of wealth on anyone? Such an accumulation of wealth brings to light fresh desires which cannot be consummated without wrong to some one. And what else were the two branches of Law, I mean Canon and Civil Law, designed to remedy so much as that cupidity which grows by the amassing of riches? Certainly both branches of the Law make this sufficiently plain when we read their beginnings, that is, the beginnings of their written record. Oh how plain it is, nay, superabundantly plain, that riches in their increase are wholly imperfect, since nothing but imperfection can come of them after that they have been heaped together. And this is what the text affirms.

Here, however, a doubt arises from a question which is

not to be passed over without putting and answering it. Some caviller at the truth might say that if desire, growing with the acquisition of riches, renders them imperfect and therefore vile, knowledge for the same reason is also imperfect and vile, since the desire of it ever keeps growing with the acquisition; whence Seneca says, 'If I had one foot in the grave, I should wish to go on learning.' But it is not true that knowledge is vile through any imperfection. Therefore by the denial of the consequent it is proved that the increase of desire does not make knowledge vile. That knowledge is perfect is made plain by the Philosopher in the sixth book of the *Ethics*, which affirms that knowledge is 'the perfected reason of things that are certain'. A short answer must be given to the question here raised. But first we must see whether desire is enlarged with the acquisition of knowledge, as is assumed in the objection; and whether the reason why it is so enlarged is the same as that for which I affirm that human desire is enlarged, not only with the acquisition of knowledge and riches, but with every other kind of acquisition, although in different ways. The reason referred to is this:—the loftiest desire of each thing, and the earliest implanted by Nature, is the desire of returning to its first cause. And since God is the first cause of our souls, and has created them like unto Himself (as it is written, 'Let us make man in our own image and likeness'), the soul desires most of all to return to Him. And just as a pilgrim who travels by a road on which he never went before thinks that every house which he sees from afar is an inn, and on finding that it is not fixes his trust on some other, and so from house to house until he comes to the inn; so our soul as soon as ever she enters on this new and hitherto untrodden path of life bends her gaze

on the highest good as the goal, and therefore believes that everything she sees which appears to contain some good in itself is that highest good. And because her knowledge is at first imperfect through inexperience and lack of instruction, small goods appear great to her, and therefore her desires are first directed to these. So we see little children fixing their chief desire on an apple ; then as they go farther they desire a small bird ; then going farther still, fine clothes ; after this a horse, then a mistress ; after this moderate riches, then great, and afterwards the greatest wealth. And this comes to pass because in none of these things does a man find that of which he is in quest, but thinks to find it farther on. Wherefore it may be seen that one object of desire stands in front of another before the eyes of our soul, as if they were arranged in the form of a pyramid ; for the smallest object at first covers them all and is, so to speak, the apex over the final object of desire, namely, God who is, as it were, the base of all. Thus the farther we go from the apex towards the base, the greater the objects of desire appear ;\* and this is the reason why man's desires, as they gain their object, become successively greater. In this progress, however, the right path is lost through missing the way, as are the roads of the earth ; for as from one city to another there is of necessity some one road which is the best and most direct, and some one other which is ever receding farther from the goal, namely, that which goes in the opposite direction ; and many others, some approaching nearer to the goal, others diverging farther from it ; so in human life there are divers paths, one of which above all is the right road, and another the wrong, and certain other paths which are more or less wrong or right.\* And as we see that the path which goes straightest to the city fulfils the desire and brings

repose after toil, while that which goes in the opposite direction never fulfils the desire or brings repose, so it is with our life : a wise traveller arrives at the goal and rests ; the man who misses the way never arrives at the goal, but in much weariness of mind ever with greedy eyes keeps gazing before him. Thus, although this explanation does not give a complete answer to the question mooted above, at all events it opens the way for the answer, because it proves clearly that our desires do not all go on enlarging in one and the same way. But since this chapter is somewhat spun out, we must give an answer to the question in a new chapter. In that let us bring to an end the whole contention which for the present I propose to urge against riches.

XIII. In answer to the question, I affirm that the desire of knowledge cannot properly be said to grow, although, as has been said, it is in a certain fashion enlarged. For that which, properly speaking, grows is always one ; but the desire of knowledge is not always one, but is manifold ; and when the first desire is ended, a second comes into play ; so that, properly speaking, the enlargement of this desire is not growth but a transition from something small to something large. For if I desire to know the principles of natural objects, as soon as ever I know these, that desire is satisfied and brought to an end : and if afterwards I wish to know what sort of thing each of those principles is, and how it exists, that is another and a fresh desire. Nor by the incidence of this desire am I deprived of the perfection to which I was brought by the former ; and this enlargement is not the cause of imperfection but of greater perfection. But the desire of riches is, properly speaking, an instance of growth, for it is always one and the same, so that no transition is



witnessed here, because no goal is reached, and no perfection attained. And if an objector were to say that as the desire to know the principles of natural objects is one thing, and the desire to know what these principles are is another, so the desire of a hundred marks is one thing, and the desire of a thousand is another; I answer that this is not true, for a hundred is part of a thousand, and the two are co-ordinate, as a portion of a line is co-ordinate with the whole line along which there is one single continuous movement; and here there is no transition, nor is the movement brought to perfection at any one point. But to know what are the principles of natural objects, and to know the nature of each individual principle, are not parts one of another, but are related to one another as different lines, along which there is no single continuous movement; but when the movement along the one is perfected, it is succeeded by the movement along the other. And thus it appears that we are not, as the objection assumes, to call knowledge imperfect because of the desire of knowledge in the same way as we call riches imperfect because of the desire of riches. For in the desire of knowledge desires are consummated, and perfection attained successively, but it is not so with the desire for riches; so that the doubt is resolved and does not hold its ground.

An opponent may indeed easily cavil again by saying that although many desires are fulfilled in the acquisition of knowledge, yet the final desire is never attained; and this is almost the same thing as the imperfection of a desire which never comes to an end, and is only one. Here again it is answered that the objection raised is not sound, I mean the objection that we never arrive at the final desire; for our natural desires, as was shown above in the third Tractate, are graduated to a certain end; and the desire of knowledge

is natural, so that a certain end satisfies it, although through taking the wrong road those who bring the day's journey to an end are few. And he who understands the Commentator on the third book *Of the Soul*, understands him in this sense; and accordingly Aristotle in the tenth book of the *Ethics*, speaking against the poet Simonides, says that 'a man ought as far as possible to be attracted to divine things', by which he shows that our faculty makes for a certain end. And in the first book of the *Ethics* he says that 'the trained student asks to know the certainty of things, so far as their nature admits of certainty'. By this he shows that we must regard the end not only from the side of the man who desires it, but from the side of the object of knowledge which is desired; and therefore Paul tells us 'not to know more than it is meet to know, but to know in due measure'. So that in whatever way the desire of knowledge is understood, whether in a general or in a particular sense, it attains to perfection; and therefore perfect knowledge has a noble perfection; and the perfection of knowledge is not marred by the desire of it, as is the case with these accursed riches. •

How these are disastrous in the possession of them is now briefly to be demonstrated; and this is the third mark of their imperfection. The possession of them may be seen to be disastrous for two reasons: firstly, that it is the cause of evil; secondly, that it is the privation of good. It is the cause of evil inasmuch as it makes the possessor timid and hated. What alarm is felt by one who is conscious that he has riches about him, when he is travelling, when he is halting, not only in his waking, but in his sleeping hours, not only fear of losing his property, but fear of losing his life on account of his property. The wretched merchants who go about the world know this full well. The leaves which quiver

in the wind make them tremble when they carry riches with them; and when they are without them they are filled with the sense of security, and shorten their journey by song and discourse. And therefore the wise man says that 'if the traveller entered on his journey empty-handed, he would sing in presence of the robber'. And this is what Lucan affirms in the fifth book when he extols poverty for its freedom from care, saying, 'O careless ease of the poor man's life! O straitened dwellings and huts! O riches of the gods still misunderstood! What temples and what bulwarks could this fortune befall, I mean that they should fear not nor be disturbed when the hand of Caesar knocks!' So says Lucan when he describes how Caesar came by night to the hut of the fisherman Amyclas in order to cross the Adriatic Sea. And how great is the hatred which every one bears towards the possessor of riches, whether from envy or from the desire of laying hands on this possession. Verily it is so great that oft-times the son violates the filial love he owes by seeking to compass a father's death; and of this the Latins both in the region of the Po, and in the region of the Tiber may find the most signal and notorious examples. And therefore Boethius in the second book of his *Consolation* says, 'Verily avarice makes men hated.' The possession of riches is also the privation of good, for while they are retained, munificence, which is a virtue, cannot exist; and virtue constitutes perfect good, and makes men far-shining and beloved, which they cannot be through the possession of riches, but only by surrendering the possession of them. Hence Boethius says in the same book, 'Money is then good when being transferred to others by the practice of munificence it ceases to be possessed.' Wherefore the vileness of riches is made sufficiently manifest by all these indications

of it ; and therefore the man of right desire and of true knowledge never loves them ; and not loving them he does not unite with them, but wishes always to keep them at a distance from him except so far as they are adapted to serve some necessary purpose. And this is reasonable conduct, because the perfect cannot unite with the imperfect. Hence we see that a crooked line never coincides with a straight line, but if there is any coincidence it is not of one line with another, but of point with point. And therefore it follows that the mind which is 'upright', that is, in its desires, and 'true', that is, in knowledge, 'doth not discompose itself' because riches are lost, as the text lays down at the end of this section. And by this result the text aims at proving that riches are like 'a river that runs far from the upright tower' of reason or nobility ; and hence that riches cannot take away nobility from any one who possesses it. And in this way we bring arguments and proofs against riches by the help of the present Canzone.

XIV. Now that the errors of others have been refuted, so far as they are contained in that part of the definition which relied on riches, we must go on to refute that portion of it in which time is affirmed to be a cause of nobility by the words 'ancestral riches'. This refutation is effected in that division of the Canzone which begins, 'Nor do these allow that a base-born man may become gentle.' And in the first place they who thus err are refuted by an argument which they themselves advance ; afterwards to their greater confusion this argument of theirs is also destroyed ; this is done when the text says, 'Moreover it followeth from what I have set down before.' Last of all we come to the conclusion that their error is manifest, and therefore that it is time to

attend to the truth. This conclusion is drawn in the words, 'Wherefore to sound intellects, &c.'

I say, therefore, 'Nor do they allow that a base-born man may become gentle.' Here we must know that it is the opinion of these mistaken men that no one who begins by being a clown can ever become a gentleman, and in like manner, that he who is the son of a clown can never be called gentle. And this overthrows that same teaching of theirs in which, by inserting this word 'ancestral', they affirm that time is required for nobility, because it is impossible by the progress of time to arrive at the point at which nobility is engendered. This reasoning of theirs above mentioned proves this, for it destroys the possibility that a base-born man can ever become gentle by any conduct of his own or by any chance: and it destroys the possibility of a change from a base-born father to a gentle son, for if the son of a clown is only a clown, and his son is only the son of a clown, and the son of that son is also a clown, and so on for ever, never will it be possible to find the point at which by progress of time nobility begins.<sup>11</sup> And if our opponent, wishing to defend himself, should say that nobility will begin at the time when the low estate of a man's forefathers shall be forgotten, I answer that by this assumption they contradict themselves, for indeed at that point there will necessarily be a transition from clownishness to nobility, when one man becomes another kind of man, or when the change is made from father to son, which is contrary to what they themselves assume.

And if the opponent should obstinately defend himself by saying that they do really mean that this transition can take place whenever the low estate of a man's forefathers falls into oblivion, although the text does not concern itself

with this, it is proper that the gloss should provide an answer to it. Therefore I give this answer, namely, that from what they say four of the greatest absurdities arise, so that their argument cannot be sound.

The first absurdity is that the better human nature became, the more slowly and with the greater difficulty would nobility be engendered; which is in the highest degree absurd, inasmuch as a thing is remembered longer in proportion as it is better, and is the more productive of good; and nobility is borne in mind as being reckoned among goods.<sup>n</sup> And that this argument holds good may thus be proved. If the gentle nature or nobility (which I take to be the same thing) were engendered by oblivion, it would be engendered the more quickly in proportion to the shortness of men's memories, for the more quickly would forgetfulness of every kind set in. Therefore the shorter men's memories the sooner would they become noble; and, on the contrary, the longer the memories men had, the more slowly would they become noble.

The second absurdity is, that this distinction between noble and mean would not be applicable to anything else but man; and this would be very absurd, inasmuch as in every species of thing we see the counterpart of nobility or meanness. Hence we often speak of a noble or mean horse, of a noble or mean falcon, and of a noble or mean pearl. And that this distinction could not (on their hypothesis) be made may be thus proved. If oblivion of mean ancestors is the cause of nobility, where there never were any mean ancestors there cannot be any oblivion of them, inasmuch as oblivion is decay of memory, and in those other animals and in plants and minerals meanness or loftiness of this kind is not marked (because all these receiving their endowment from Nature

alone are on one and the same footing of equality, and in them there can be no generation of nobility, and similarly of meanness, inasmuch as both these qualities are to be regarded as possession or privation which are predicable of one and the same subject); and for these reasons in them there could (on their hypothesis) be no distinction drawn between the two qualities.<sup>n</sup> And if an opponent were to say that in all other things but man, nobility signifies the excellence of a thing, but in man it signifies that the memory of his base condition has passed away, any one would wish to reply not with words but with a dagger to such brutal ignorance as is shown by assigning goodness as the cause of nobility in all other things, and oblivion as the cause of nobility in men.

The third absurdity is that what is generated would often precede that which generates, which is wholly impossible. This can be demonstrated as follows. Let us suppose that Gherardo da Cammino was the grandson of the meanest peasant that ever drank of Sile or Cagnano, and that oblivion had not yet overtaken his grandsire, Who would have dared to say that Gherardo da Cammino was a base fellow? Who would not agree with me in saying that he was noble? Surely nobody, let him be as presumptuous as he will; for Gherardo was noble, and so will his memory ever be. And if oblivion of his base ancestor had not set in, as the objection assumes, and Gherardo had still been great and noble, and nobility had been so plainly seen in him as it is, it would have existed in him before that which generates it had been in existence, and this is in the highest degree absurd.

The fourth absurdity is that some man would be deemed noble after his death who was not noble during his life, than which nothing can be more absurd. This can be demon-

strated as follows : Let us suppose that in the lifetime of Dardanus the memory of his base ancestors survived, and that in the time of Laomedon their memory had been lost, and had been succeeded by oblivion. According to the opinion of our opponent Laomedon was gentle and Dardanus a clown in their respective lives. We to whom the memory of their ancestors (I mean those who preceded Dardanus) has not descended, shall we say that Dardanus in his lifetime was a clown, and noble after his death? And that Dardanus was the son of Jove does not contradict what I have said, for this is a fable to which in philosophical discussion no heed should be paid. And yet if our opponent should desire to take his stand on the fable, certainly what the fable veils upsets all his arguments. And thus it is plain that the reasoning which assumed oblivion to be the cause of nobility is false and mistaken.

XV. Now that my Canzone by the help of their own verdict has proved against them that time is not essential for nobility, we must go on at once to overthrow their aforesaid opinion in order that their fallacious reasoning may leave no rust on minds fitted for the reception of truth. And this my Canzone does when it says, ' Moreover, it followeth from what I have set down before.'

Here we must understand that if a man cannot change from simple to gentle, and a gentle son cannot be the offspring of a base father as their opinion assumes, one of two absurdities must needs follow. The first is that there is no such thing as nobility ; the second is that the world must always have had more than one man in it, so that the human race could not be descended from one man only. This can be demonstrated as follows : If nobility cannot be generated for the



first time, as we have often affirmed their opinion to imply, since they do not allow nobility to be generated by a base man in himself, or by a base father in his son, then a man always remains such as he is born. And he is born such as his father was, and so this continuance of a single condition has come down all the way from our first parent, because all the race of men must needs be such as was our first progenitor, namely, Adam, for this reasoning does not enable us to discover any change of condition from the time of Adam to the men of the present day. Therefore, if Adam was noble, we are all noble; and if Adam was base, we are all base; and this is as good as to abolish the distinction between these conditions, in other words, to abolish the conditions themselves. And this means, that from their opinion which has been stated above it follows 'that we are all gentle or base'. And if it be not so, some people are still of necessity to be called noble, and others base. Since it is proved impossible that baseness can be transformed into nobility, the race of men must needs be descended from different origins, that is, from a noble and from a base origin, and this my Canzone affirms when it says, 'or else that man had no beginning,' that is, no single beginning (it does not say beginnings); and this is utterly false according to the Philosopher, according to our faith which cannot lie, and according to the law and ancient belief of the Gentiles. For although the Philosopher does not assume the procession of mankind from a single man, he yet maintains the existence of only one single essence in all men, and this essence cannot have different sources. And Plato maintains that all men depend on one 'Idea' only, and this is the same as assigning them a single origin. And doubtless Aristotle would laugh loud if he heard the human race referred to different species in

the same way as horses and asses : for they who hold this opinion (may Aristotle forgive me) might well be called asses. That this notion is utterly false according to our faith (which is wholly to be maintained) is plain from Solomon, for in that passage where he is making a distinction between men and brute animals he calls the former all sons of Adam. This he does when he says, 'who knoweth if the spirits of the sons of Adam go up, and those of the beasts go down?' And in proof that this was false according to the Gentiles, behold the testimony of Ovid in the first book of his *Metamorphoses*, in which he discusses the constitution of the world according to the belief of the pagans, or Gentiles, saying, 'Man is born' (he does not say 'men'), 'man is born either because the master-workman of the world made him of the seed of the gods, or because the new-born earth recently severed from the noble ether retained the seeds of the kindred heaven; and this earth mixed with water from the river the son of Iapetus, namely, Prometheus, compounded in the likeness of the gods who govern all things.' Here he manifestly assumes that the first man was only one individual; and therefore my Canzone says, 'But to that I assent not,' that is, to the assumption that man had no beginning, and it adds, 'Nor they, any more than I, if they are Christians.' And it says, 'Christians,' not 'Philosophers' or 'Gentiles' (whose opinions are also adverse), because Christian opinion has greater force, and is the destruction of all cavilling, thanks to the supreme light of heaven which illuminates it.

Afterwards, when I say, 'Wherefore to sound intellects it is plain that their sayings are empty,' I draw the conclusion that their error is confounded, and I say that it is time to open our eyes to the truth. And this I affirm when I add, 'And now I will speak just as I feel, and say.

I affirm then that from what has been said it is obvious to all sound intellects that their sayings are empty, that is, without any<sup>c</sup> marrow of truth. And I use the word 'sound' not without reason. Whence we must know that our intellects may be called sound or sickly; and by the intellect I mean the noble part of our soul which may be designated by the common term 'mind'. The intellect may be termed 'sound' when no evil disposition of mind or body impedes it in its operation, which consists in getting to know what things are, as Aristotle intimates in the third book *On the Soul*.

For I have seen evil disposition of soul attended with three terrible kinds of sickness in the mind of men. The first is due to natural boastfulness, for there are many so presumptuous as to believe themselves to know everything, and on account of this they affirm as certainties things that are not certain. This vice Tully specially reprobates in the first book *On the Offices*, and Thomas in his *Contra Gentiles*, saying, 'There are many by their natural disposition so presumptuous as to believe that they can gauge all things by their intellect, deeming everything true that seems to them true, and everything false that does not.' And hence it comes to pass that they never attain to learning, believing that they are sufficiently instructed of themselves; they never ask questions, they never listen, they desire to have questions asked of them, and before the question is finished they answer wrong. And of such as these Solomon says in the *Proverbs*, 'Have ye beheld a man swift to answer? From him foolishness is to be looked for rather than correction.' The second kind of sickness<sup>d</sup> is caused by natural dejection of mind, for there are many so obstinate in their dejection that they cannot believe it possible for things to be known either by themselves or by others; and such as these never inquire

or reason for themselves, and never heed what others say. And Aristotle in the first book of the *Ethics* speaks against these, saying that 'they are not qualified to be students of moral philosophy'. These all like beasts live in ignorance, despairing of all learning. The third kind of sickness is caused by levity of nature, for many have such light imagination that they pass bounds in all their reasoning, and before they frame a syllogism leap to the conclusion, and from this conclusion they fly off to another, and they seem to themselves to be arguing most subtly when they do not start from any principle, and do not really perceive anything true in their imaginings. And of these the Philosopher says that we should take no heed of them and have no dealings with them, affirming in the first book of the *Physics* that 'it is not meet to argue' with one who denies first principles. And among them are to be found many uneducated persons who do not know their A B C, and yet would dispute in Geometry, Astrology, and Physics.

And in consequence of evil disposition, or defectiveness of body, the mind may be unsound sometimes through congenital defect in some original principle, as in the half-witted, sometimes through derangement of the brain, as in madmen. And to this mental malady the Law points when the *Infortiatum* says, 'In one who makes a will, at the time when the will is made soundness of mind, not of body, is required.' Wherefore to all those intellects who are not sickly through evil disposition of mind or body, but are free and unfettered and healthy subjects of the light of truth, I affirm it to be obvious that the popular opinion which I have mentioned is empty, that is, worthless.

Afterwards the text adds that I thus judge them to be false and vain, and thus reprove them. And this is done

when I say, 'And I therefore reprove them as false.' And afterwards I say that we must go on to demonstrate the truth, and I say that this must be demonstrated, namely, what nobility is, and how the man in whom it dwells may be discerned; and this I affirm in the words, 'and now I will speak just as I feel and say.'

XVI. 'The King shall rejoice in God, and all those who swear by him shall be praised, because the mouth of those who speak unjust things is locked.' These words I can rightly prefix here, because every rightful king ought to love truth most of all. Wherefore it is written in the book of *Wisdom*, 'Love the light of Wisdom, ye who go before the peoples'; and the light of Wisdom is Truth itself. I say that every King shall therefore rejoice at the refutation of the most false and mischievous opinion of wicked and misguided men, who until now have spoken wrongfully of nobility.

It is fitting now to proceed to the part which treats of the Truth, according to the division made above in the third chapter of the present *Tractate*. This second part therefore beginning, 'I affirm that every virtue primarily,' is designed to lay down the limits of this nobility in accordance with the Truth. And this part is divided into two, for the object of the first portion is to show what this 'nobility' is; of the second how he in whom she dwells is to be recognized. And this second portion begins, 'The soul whom this goodness doth adorn.'

The first portion, moreover, has two divisions; for in the former certain things are sought which are necessary for apprehending the definition of nobility; in the latter its definition is sought; and this second division begins, 'Wherever virtue is there is nobility.'

If we would be perfectly equipped for entering upon our comment two things must first be ascertained : in the first place, what is meant by this word nobility considered simply by itself ; in the second, by what road we should travel in order to seek the definition mentioned above. I say, therefore, that if we would have regard to the common habit of speech, this word nobility signifies in each thing the perfection of the nature peculiar to it. Hence it is predicable not only of man, but also of all other things ; for men apply the epithet noble to stones, plants, horses, falcons, whatever is seen to be perfect in its own proper nature. Therefore Solomon says in *Ecclesiastes*, ‘Blessed is the land whose King is noble,’ which is the same as to say, ‘whose King is perfect as regards the perfection of soul and of body’; and this he makes plain by what he says before when he affirms, ‘Woe to thee, O land, whose King is a child,’ that is, whose king is not completely a man ; and a man is a child not only by reason of his age, but by reason of disorderly ways and faults of life, as the Philosopher teaches us in the first book of the *Ethics*. There are, indeed, some foolish persons who believe that this word ‘noble’ means named and known by many, and they say that it comes from a verb which means to be acquainted with, namely, *nosco* ; and this is most false. For if this were so, those things that were the most talked about and known in their kind would be the noblest of their kind ; and so the obelisk of St. Peter would be the noblest stone in the world ; and Asdente, the cobbler of Parma, would be nobler than any of his fellow citizens, and Alboin della Scala would be nobler than Guido da Castello of Reggio ; whereas every one of these things is quite false. And therefore it is most false that noble comes from *nosco*, but it comes from *non vile* ; hence ‘noble’ is the same as

‘not vile’. The Philosopher refers to this perfection in the seventh book of the *Physics* when he says, ‘Everything is in the highest degree perfect when it attains and reaches its proper virtue ; and it is then in the highest degree perfect so far as concerns its own nature. Hence a circle can then be called perfect when it is truly a circle, that is, when it attains the virtue proper to it ; it then exists in its entire nature, and can then be called a noble circle.’ And this is the case when there is in the circle a point that is equally distant from the circumference. That circle which has the shape of an egg loses its proper virtue, and is not noble ; nor is a circle noble that has almost the shape of a full moon, because in such an one its proper nature is not perfect. And thus it may be plainly seen that in general this word ‘nobility’ signifies that anything is perfect in its nature ; and this is the meaning which is sought in the first place, in order the better to enter upon the commentary on that part which we purpose to expound. In the second place we must see how we are to advance in order to find the definition of man’s nobility, which is the object of our present procedure. I say then that, inasmuch as in those things which are of a single species, such as are all men, their highest perfection cannot be defined by their essential constituents ; it is meet to define and to ascertain it by means of their effects ; and therefore we read in the Gospel of St. Matthew what Christ says, ‘Beware of false prophets, by their fruits ye shall know them,’ and we may ascertain the definition of which we are in quest by the straight road, namely, by their fruits, which are the moral and intellectual virtues, of which this nobility of ours is the seed, as will be made fully manifest by its definition. And these are the two things which must needs be perceived before we proceed further, as is said above in this chapter.

XVII. Now that these two points have been examined, which it seemed helpful to examine before proceeding to deal with the text, we must go on to explain this. Now the text begins with saying, 'I affirm that every virtue primarily cometh from one root, virtue I mean which maketh a man happy in all his doing,' and it adds, 'this root (as the *Ethics* affirm) is a habit of choice,' laying down the whole definition of moral virtue, as it is propounded by the Philosopher in the second book of the *Ethics*. In this stress is laid chiefly on two points; the first is, that every virtue comes from a single principle; the second, that this expression 'every virtue' refers to the moral virtues which are our theme; and this is plain when the text says, 'This root (as the *Ethics* affirm).' Here we must know that the fruits which are most peculiarly our own are the moral virtues, since from every point of view they are in our own power, and different philosophers enumerate and distinguish them in different ways. But since in any matter on which the divine judgement of Aristotle opens its mouth it seems best to me to set aside that of every one else, as I wish to say what these virtues are, I will pass rapidly on discoursing of them in accordance with his judgement. The following are the eleven virtues characterized by the said Philosopher.

The first is called Courage, which is a weapon and curb for controlling our boldness and fearfulness in the things which threaten injury to our lives.

The second is Temperance, which is a rule and curb for our greediness and excessive abstinence in the things which preserve our lives.

The third is Liberality, which is our controller in the giving and receiving of things temporal.

The fourth is Magnificence, which is the controller of our



great expenditure, incurring it and maintaining it within certain limits.

The fifth is Highmindedness, which is the controller and winner of great honours and renown.

The sixth is Love of honour, which controls and regulates our conduct with regard to the honours of this world.

The seventh is Good temper, which controls our anger and our excessive patience under external ills.

The eighth is Affability, which makes us associate on good terms with mankind.

The ninth is called Truthfulness, which keeps us from boasting ourselves to be more than we are, and from depreciating ourselves as less than we are, in our talk.

The tenth is called Pleasantry, which controls us in our amusements, enabling us to use them as we should.

The eleventh is Justice, which disposes us to love and to practise uprightness in all things.

And each of these virtues has two enemies, that is, vices, one on the side of excess, the other on the side of defect. And the virtues are the mean states between these; and they all spring from one principle, that is, from our habit of right choice. It may therefore be said generally that they are 'a habit of choice residing in the mean'. And these are they which make a man blest, or happy in their exercise, as the Philosopher says in the first book of the *Ethics* when he defines Happiness by saying that Happiness is 'activity in accordance with virtue in a perfect life'. It is rightly assumed by many that Prudence, that is, good sense, is a moral virtue; but Aristotle reckons this among the intellectual virtues, although it is the guide of the moral virtues, and shows us how they are compounded, and how without Prudence virtue cannot be.

We ought indeed to be aware that we may enjoy two kinds of happiness in this life, according as we follow two paths, the good and the best, which conduct us thither. One of these is the Active, the other the Contemplative Life. The latter (although by the Active we arrive, as has been said, at happiness of a good kind) leads us to the best happiness and blessedness, as the Philosopher proves in the tenth book of the *Ethics*. And Christ with His own lips affirms this in the Gospel of Luke, speaking to Martha, and making answer to her, 'Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troublest thyself about many things; verily one thing only is needful,' namely, what thou art doing, and He adds, 'Mary has chosen the best part which shall not be taken from her.' And Mary (as we are told in the passage preceding these words of the Gospel), sitting at the feet of Christ, showed no concern for the service of the house, but only listened to the words of the Saviour. And if we wish to expound this morally, our Lord desired to show hereby that the Contemplative Life was best, although the Active Life was good. This is plain to any one who will rightly apply his mind to the divine words. Some one, however, might argue against me, and say: 'Since the happiness of the Contemplative is more excellent than that of the Active Life, and since both may be and are the fruit and end of Nobility, why not proceed rather by way of the Intellectual, than by way of the Moral virtues.' To this it may briefly be answered that in all teaching regard must be had to the capacity of the learner, and he must be led by that path which is easiest for him. Therefore, inasmuch as the moral virtues appear to be and are more common and better known, and more in request than the others, and all present the same outward characteristics, it was expedient and convenient to proceed

by this path rather than by the other ; for we should come to know about bees as well by reasoning from the product of wax as by reasoning from the product of honey, though both alike are produced by them.

XVIII. In the preceding chapter it has been decided that every moral virtue springs from one origin, namely, right and habitual choice ; and this is implied by the present text up to that part which begins, ‘I say that nobility by its conception.’ In this portion, therefore, we go on by the method of probable reasoning to perceive that every virtue mentioned above, whether considered individually or generically, proceeds from nobility as effect from cause. And this conclusion is based on a philosophical proposition, which affirms that when two things are found to agree in one attribute both of these must be referred to some third thing, or one of them to the other, as effect to cause ; because any such attribute, if possessed as a primary and essential quality, cannot come into being except from a single cause ; and if these were not both the effects of some third thing, or the one the effect of the other, each would have that common attribute primarily and essentially, which is absurd. Our text affirms, therefore, that nobility and the virtue above defined (namely, moral virtue) agree in this, that each of them implies praise of him of whom it is affirmed ; and this the text asserts when it says, ‘wherefore with the ~~same~~ predicate both of two things agree which are of one effect,’ i.e. which redound to the praise and high esteem of him to whom men affirm them to belong.

And then the text, going on the strength of the proposition noted above, draws a conclusion and affirms that therefore the one must needs proceed from the other, or both from

a third ; and it adds that the one must be assumed to come from the other rather than both from a third, if it appears that the one holds good of as much as the other, or of even more ; and this it affirms when it says, ‘ But if the one holdeth good for all for which the other doth hold good.’ In this passage we must know that we are not here advancing by means of necessary demonstration : we are proceeding as we should if we were to say that if cold generates moisture, and we see clouds [discharging, that effect is due to cold]. The text expresses a good and reasonable induction ;<sup>n</sup> for if there are in us several things deserving of praise, and the source of the praise we deserve is in ourselves, it is reasonable to refer these things to that source ; and that which carries with it several things may more reasonably be called the source and origin of these, than these be called the origin of that. For the trunk of a tree, in which all the various branches unite, may be called the source and cause of these, and not they of the trunk ; and so nobility, which includes every virtue (in the sense in which the cause includes the effect), together with many other of our praiseworthy activities, ought to be considered a source of such a kind that virtue should be referred to it, rather than to any third thing which may be in us.

Lastly, with regard to the assertion that ‘ every moral virtue cometh from one root ’, and that such virtue and nobility agree in one thing as has been said above, and that therefore it is meet to refer one of these to the other, or both to some third ; and that if the one holds good of all of which the other holds good and of more, the latter proceeds from it rather than from any other third ; the text affirms that all this is ‘ taken for granted ’, namely, that it is contrived and made ready for that which is

our further aim. And so ends this stanza, and this present section.

XIX. Since in the foregoing section we have thoroughly discussed certain three definite matters, which were necessary in order to learn how this good thing of which we are speaking can be defined, we must now go on to the next section which begins, 'Wherever virtue is there is nobility.' And this may be brought under two subdivisions. In the first we prove a certain thing which has been touched on before, and has been left unproven; in the second we come to a conclusion and find this definition which we are seeking; and this second part begins, 'Therefore as perse from black.'

In support of our argument in the first subdivision we may recall how it was said above that if nobility is of wider extent and application than virtue, virtue will rather proceed from it. And this assertion, namely, that nobility is a term of wider extent than virtue, this subdivision now proves, drawing an illustration from the heaven, and saying that 'wherever virtue is there is nobility'. And here we should know that (as is written in Law and is deemed a rule of Law), there is no need to prove those things which are evident of themselves, and do not need to be proved; and nothing is more evident than that wherever virtue is there also is nobility, and we see that everything may be called noble after its own kind. The text therefore says, 'As there is sky wherever there is a star,' and it is not true, *e converso*, that there is a star wherever there is sky; so there is nobility wherever there is virtue, but there is not always virtue wherever there is nobility. How fine and appropriate an illustration! For truly nobility is a heaven in which many and divers

stars are shining; there shine in her the intellectual and moral virtues; there shine in her good dispositions bestowed by nature, namely, Piety and Religion, and praiseworthy feelings, namely, Shame and Pity, and many more; there shine in her bodily excellences, namely, Beauty, Strength, and Health almost unbroken. And so many are the stars which spread themselves over her sky, that surely we cannot wonder if they make many and divers fruits grow on human nobility, so many are their natures and potencies, concentrated and united in one simple substance; and on them as on divers branches she bears fruit in divers ways. In very truth I dare affirm that human nobility, when its importance is measured by the number of the fruits which it bears, surpasses that of angels, although the nobility of an angel be more divine in its unity. Of this our nobility, as productive of so many and so various fruits, the Psalmist was cognizant when he composed that Psalm which begins, 'O Lord, how admirable is Thy name in all the earth'; where he extols man as if wondering at the divine affection for that human creature, saying, 'What a thing is man, that Thou, O Lord, visitest him! Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels; Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, and hast set him over the works of Thy hands.' Truly, therefore, was it a fine and appropriate comparison of the heaven with man's nobility.

Afterwards, when the text says 'So we in woman and in those of tender age', it proves what I say, showing that nobility extends to regions where virtue is not found. And it says, 'we recognize this healthfulness' (referring to nobility which certainly is true healthfulness) to be wherever there is shame, that is, fear of dishonour, as it exists in woman and in the young in whom shame is good and praiseworthy,

though this shame is not virtue, but a certain right feeling. And it says, 'And we in woman and in those of tender age,' that is, in the young, because, as the Philosopher puts it in the fourth book of the *Ethics*, 'Shame is not praiseworthy, nor a good thing in the old or in serious men,' because it becomes them to keep themselves from aught that leads them to feel shame. Such precaution is not so much expected from youths and women; and therefore the fear of being dishonoured through some fault is praiseworthy in them, for this fear arises from nobility. And this feeling in them may be considered nobility, just as shamelessness is baseness and lack of nobility. It is therefore good and the best sign of nobility in children, and those of unripe age, if after a fault shame is painted on their faces, for then it is the fruit of true nobility.

XX. Afterwards when there follows, 'Therefore as *perse* from black,' the text proceeds to the definition of nobility, which is the object of our search, and will enable us to perceive what is this nobility, in speaking of which so many people make mistakes. The text, therefore, drawing a conclusion from what has been said before, affirms that therefore every virtue 'or the genus thereof', i.e. the habit of choice consisting in the mean, will come from this, namely, from nobility. And an illustration is given from colour, when it says that as *perse* is derived from black, so this quality, namely, virtue, is derived from nobility. *Perse* is a colour in which purple is blended with black, but black predominates, and from black *perse* gets its designation. And in the same way virtue is a thing compounded of nobility and emotion, but because nobility predominates over the latter, virtue gets its designation from nobility and is termed Goodness.

In the next place the Canzone argues from what has been said that no one, because he is able to say, 'I am of such or such a stock,' is entitled to believe that he is possessed of nobility, if these fruits are not in him. And it immediately supplies a reason, saying that those who have this 'grace' that is, this divine thing, are wellnigh like gods, free from all stain of vice. And none can confer this gift save God alone, with whom there is no respect of persons, as the divine Scriptures declare. And let it not seem too lofty a speech to be addressed to any one when the text affirms, 'that they are wellnigh gods,' for, as we have remarked above in the seventh chapter of the third Tractate, just as there are men who are vilest and most bestial, so also there are men who are noblest and most divine. And Aristotle proves this in the seventh book of the *Ethics* by a passage from the poet Homer. Therefore, let not any scion of the Uberti of Florence or of the Visconti of Milan say, 'Because I am of such a race I am noble,' for the divine seed does not fall upon a race, that is, a stock, but on the several individuals; and, as will be proved below, the stock does not make the several individuals noble, but the individuals ennoble the stock.

Afterwards, when the text says 'For God alone endoweth that soul with it', reference is made to that which is receptive, namely, the subject on whom this divine gift descends, for it is truly a divine gift, according to the words of the Apostle, 'Every good gift and every perfect gift cometh down from above, from the Father of lights.' It affirms, therefore, that God alone extends this grace to the soul of that man whom He sees standing perfectly adapted and prepared in his own person for the reception of this divine act. For as the Philosopher says in the second book *On the Soul*, 'Things must be adapted for the agents if they are to be receptive of



their acts.' Therefore, if the attitude of the soul is defective, it is not adapted to receive this blessed and divine infusion; just as a pearl if it be ill adapted, or defective, cannot receive the heavenly virtue, as that noble Guido Guinicelli remarks in a Canzone of his which begins, 'To the gentle heart Love ever repaireth.' It is, therefore, possible for a soul to be in evil plight in any person from defect of constitution or perhaps from some defect of season, and in such a soul this divine radiance never glows. And such as these, whose soul is deprived of this light, may say that they are like valleys facing towards the North, or underground caves, into which the light of the sun never descends, unless it be reflected from some other quarter which is illuminated by it.

Finally, the text draws a conclusion from what is said above, namely, that the virtues are the fruit of nobility which God puts into the soul that is in a good setting, and declares that 'With some few' (that is, with those who have understanding who are but few) 'the seed of happiness doth join company'. And it is plain that man's nobility is nothing else than the seed of happiness dispatched by God to the soul that is in a good setting, that is, the soul whose body is perfectly adjusted in every part. For if the virtues are the fruit of nobility, and happiness is enjoyment attained, it is plain that nobility herself is the seed of happiness, as has been said. And if we look carefully, this definition embraces all four causes, namely, material, formal, efficient, and final: material, inasmuch as it says 'in the mind that is happily placed', which is the material and subject matter of nobility; formal, inasmuch as it says that it is the 'seed'; efficient, inasmuch as it says 'dispatched by God to the soul'; final, inasmuch as it says 'of happiness'. And thus is this goodness of ours defined, which descends into us from the highest

spiritual virtue in the same way that virtue descends into a precious stone from the noblest celestial body.

XXI. In order that we may have more perfect cognizance of that human excellence which is called Nobility, so far as it is in us the source of all good, we must in this particular chapter declare how this excellence descends into us ; first explaining it after the natural fashion, afterwards after the theological, that is, the divine and spiritual fashion. First we must know that man is compounded of soul and body ; but to the soul, as has been said, belongs that excellence which is, as it were, the seed sown by the divine virtue. Divers philosophers indeed have held diverse discourse on the difference between men's souls ; for Avicenna and Algazel would have them to be noble and base of themselves and by reason of their origin. Plato and others were of opinion that they came forth from the stars, and were more or less noble according to the nobility of the star. Pythagoras would make them all of like nobility, not only the souls of men, but those of brute animals and of plants as well, and the forms of the minerals, and said that their corporeal forms constituted their sole differentiae. If each were to plead for his own opinion, it might be that truth would be seen to reside in them all. But since at first sight they appear somewhat remote from the truth, it is better not to take them as our guide, but the opinion of Aristotle and the Peripatetics. And therefore I say that when the seed of man falls into its receptacle, namely, the matrix, it carries with it the virtue of the generating soul, and the virtue of the heaven, and the virtue of the elements bound up in it, that is to say, its complexion; and it ripens and adapts the material to receive the formative virtue, which is given by

the soul of the generator. And the formative virtue prepares the organs for the heavenly virtue, which from the potentiality of the seed brings forth the soul into life. The soul as soon as ever it is brought forth receives the potential intellect from the virtue of the mover of the heaven; and this in itself potentially introduces into the soul all the universal forms so far as they exist in the Producer of the intellect, and in a lesser degree in proportion as this intellect is remote from the Primal Intelligence.

Let no one wonder if I speak such things as seem hard to understand; for to me myself it seems marvellous that such production can indeed be inferred and perceived by the intellect; and it is not a thing for language to make plain, language, I mean, that is truly the language of the people. Wherefore I would say with the Apostle, 'Oh, the height of the riches of the wisdom of God, how incomprehensible are Thy judgements, and Thy ways past finding out!' And since the complexion of the seed may be more or less good, and the disposition of the sower may be more or less good, and the disposition of the heaven for this effect may be good, or better, or best (for this varies on account of the constellations which are always changing), it comes to pass that the soul produced by the seed of men, and by the virtue of the constellations, has different degrees of purity. And in proportion to its purity the potential intellectual virtue, which has been described, descends into it in the manner described. And, if it happens that through the purity of the receptive soul the intellectual virtue is indeed separated and assoiled from all shadow of the body, the divine excellence multiplies in this virtue as in a substance suitable for its reception; and hence it multiplies in the soul where this intellectual virtue resides according to its capacity for receiving it. And

this is that 'seed of happiness' of which we are at present speaking.

This, moreover, is agreeable to the opinion of Tully in his book *On Old Age*, when, speaking in the person of Cato, he says, 'Therefore a celestial soul descended into us, coming from the highest habitation into a place which is contrary to the divine nature and to eternity.' And in a soul of this kind there is its own proper virtue, and the Intellectual Virtue, and the Divine, that is to say, the infusion of divine excellence which has been described. Therefore it is written in the book *On Causes*, 'Every noble soul has three activities, namely, animal, intellectual, and divine.' And certain persons are of such an opinion as to affirm that, if all the aforesaid powers agreed together in producing a soul when they were best adapted for the task, so much of the Deity would descend into the soul that it would almost be another God incarnate. And this is almost all that can be said by way of natural explanation.

By way of theological explanation it may be said that after the supreme Deity, that is, God, sees His creature made ready to receive of His kindness, He bestows it on her with a bounty proportionate to her readiness to receive it. And since these gifts proceed from ineffable Love, and Divine Love is inseparable from the Holy Spirit, that is the reason why they are called the 'Gifts of the Holy Spirit'. These gifts according to the division made by Isaiah the Prophet are seven, namely, Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Strength, Knowledge, Piety, Fear of God. O excellent crop! O excellent and wonderful seed! O admirable and gracious Sower, who waitest only for human nature to prepare the ground to be sown! How blest are they who duly cultivate such seed! Here we must know that the prime

and noble offshoot that sprouts from this seed when it becomes fruitful is that appetite of the mind which in Greek is termed *bormen*. And if this is not properly tended and kept straight by good habit the seed is little worth, and had better not have been sown. And therefore St. Augustine, and Aristotle as well in the second book of the *Ethics*, would have a man accustom himself to do right and to bridle his passions, in order that this scion of which we spoke may be strengthened by good habit, and be confirmed in its uprightness, so that it may be able to bear fruit, and from its fruit may issue the enjoyment of human happiness.

XXII. It is a precept of the moral philosophers who have spoken about giving, that a man should bestow care and pains on rendering the gifts he confers as useful as he can possibly make them to the receiver. Wherefore I, being desirous of obeying such a command, strive to render this banquet of mine in each of its parts as useful as I can possibly make it. And since in this portion of my subject it chanced that I am able to offer some remark on the sweetness of human happiness, I think that no discourse I could utter would be more useful to those who are not acquainted with it : for, as the Philosopher says in the first book of the *Ethics*, and Tully in his book *On the End of Goods*, ‘ he who sees not the mark shoots badly ’; and in the same way he who does not aim at this enjoyment is ill able to advance towards it. Wherefore, inasmuch as happiness is our final resting-place, for the sake of which we live and employ ourselves on all that we do, it is most useful and necessary to perceive this mark in order to direct towards it the bow of our activity. And he most of all deserves to be thanked who points it out to those who do not see it.

Disregarding, therefore, the opinions entertained about it by the philosopher Epicurus, and by Zeno, I propose to come at once to the truthful opinion of Aristotle and the other Peripatetics. As has been said above, from the divine goodness sown and infused into us from the source of our generation, a tendril springs which the Greeks call *hormen*, that is, a natural appetite of the mind. And as with different kinds of grain which when they spring up have at first a common likeness while they are in the blade, and afterwards as they grow come to lose this likeness; so this natural appetite which has its origin from the divine grace seems to show itself in the beginning not unlike that which comes from nature pure and simple, but has much the same resemblance to the latter as the tender blade of one kind of grain has to that of another. And this kind of resemblance is found not only between man and man, but between beasts and men." This is shown by the fact that every animal, rational or brute, as soon as it is born, loves itself and fears and shuns those things that are opposed to it, and hates them; afterwards making further progress, as has been said. And as this appetite progresses a dissimilarity between appetites begins to show itself, for one takes one path, and another another. Just as the Apostle says, 'Many men run for the prize but one obtaineth it,' so these human appetites start on different paths from the beginning, though there is only one path that leads us to our peace. And, therefore, neglecting all the rest we must follow with our commentary in the wake of that appetite which makes a good start.

I say then that from the first every animal loves itself, although without discrimination. Afterwards it comes to discriminate between those things that are more lovable to it, and less or more hateful, and pursues and shuns them

more or less, according as familiarity with them discriminates between them; not merely in the case of other things for which it has a secondary love, but it also draws these distinctions in itself whom it loves primarily, and recognizing in itself a diversity of parts it loves those which therein are nobler. And inasmuch as the mind is a nobler part of a man than the body, it loves the former more; and so loving itself in the first place and all other things for the sake of itself, and having a greater love for the nobler part of itself, it is clear that it loves the mind more than the body or anything else, the mind which by nature it ought to love more than anything else. Therefore if the intelligence always takes delight in the use of the thing that is loved, which is the fruit of love, in the case of the thing which is loved most of all the use of it is most of all delightful. To us the use of our mind is most of all delightful, and that which is most of all delightful to us constitutes our happiness and our blessedness, which no delight can surpass and no other appear to surpass; as may be seen by any one who pays close attention to the foregoing reasoning.

And let no one say that every appetite is mental; for mind here is intended only for that which has relation to the rational part, namely, the Will and the Intellect. If any one, therefore, should wish to apply the term mind to the sensual appetite, this objection is not and could not be allowed; for no one doubts that the rational appetite is nobler than the sensual, and therefore more lovable. And so it is this appetite of which we are now speaking.

The employment of our mind is indeed twofold—I mean practical and speculative ('practical' is the same as 'engaged in action'); and both kinds of employment are most delightful; although that of contemplation is the more delightful,

as has been described above. Practical employment of the mind consists in acting by our own agency virtuously, that is, uprightly, with Prudence, Temperance, Courage, and Justice : speculative employment consists not in acting through our own agency, but in reflecting on the works of God and of Nature. And both the former and the latter employment are our blessedness, and highest happiness, as may be seen. This is the pleasantness of the seed above mentioned, as is now clearly manifest, although the seed often does not attain to this pleasantness because it has been badly cultivated, and its shoots have taken a wrong direction. In like manner by means of much training and cultivation it may come to pass that in a nature on which this seed does not originally fall some of the produce of the seed may be super-induced in such fashion that it attains to this fruit. And it is, as it were, a way of grafting the nature of something else on to a different root. And therefore there is nobody for whom excuse can be made, for if a man has not this seed springing from a root in himself, he may well have it by way of a graft. Would that in fact those who had made a graft on themselves were as many as those are who allow themselves to go astray from the good root in them !

One of these ways of employing the mind is indeed more full of blessedness than the other : I mean that speculative use of the mind which is the use of our noblest part, the part which is most of all the object of the love rooted in us of which I have spoken, that is to say, the Intellect. And this part cannot in this life have its perfect exercise, which is the beholding of God, who is the highest object of intelligence, save in so far as the intellect meditates on Him and beholds Him through His effects. And that we crave for this exercise of the mind and not for the other (that is, the



exercise of the life of action), as our highest Beatitude, we are taught by the Gospel of St. Mark, if we will rightly regard it. Mark says that Mary Magdalene, and Mary (the Mother) of James, and Mary Salome went to the Sepulchre to find the Saviour, and found Him not, but found a young man clothed in white, who said to them, 'Ye seek the Saviour, and I say unto you that He is not here; and do not therefore be afraid, but go and tell His disciples and Peter that He will go before them into Galilee, and there shall ye see Him as He told you.' By these three women may be understood the three schools of the life of action, namely, the Epicureans, the Stoics, and the Peripatetics, who go to the Sepulchre, that is, to the present life which is the storehouse of corruptible things, and expect to find the Saviour, that is, Beatitude, and do not find Him; but they find a youth clothed in white raiment, who according to the testimony of Matthew as well as of the others was an Angel of God. And therefore Matthew said, 'The Angel of God descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it, and his countenance was as the lightning, and his raiment was as snow.'

This Angel is this nobility of ours which comes from God as has been said, and speaks in our reason, and says to each one of these schools, that is, to every one who goes in search of Beatitude in the life of action, that 'He is not here, but go and tell the disciples and Peter' (that is, those who go seeking Him, and those who have diverged from the right path, such as Peter who had denied Him) 'that He will go before them into Galilee', that is to say, that Beatitude will go before them into Galilee, that is, into Contemplation. 'Galilee' means the same as 'Whiteness', and whiteness is a colour more charged with material light than any other;

and so Contemplation is more charged with spiritual light than anything else here below. And Scripture says, 'He shall go before you,' and does not say, 'He shall be with you,' to make us understand that God always goes in advance of our Contemplation, and that we can never here overtake Him who is our highest Beatitude. And it says, 'Here shall ye see Him as He said'; that is here shall ye have of His sweetness, that is, of happiness in such wise as it is promised to you here, that is, as assurance is given to you that ye shall be able to possess it. And so it is plain that our Beatitude, which is that happiness of which we are speaking, may be found by us, at first imperfect in the life of action, that is, in the exercise of the moral, and afterwards 'all but perfect', in the exercise of the intellectual virtues. These two kinds of activity are the quickest and most direct paths to conduct us to the supreme Beatitude, which here we cannot possess, as is apparent from what has been said.

XXIII. Since we have carried our demonstration far enough and the definition of nobility is apparent, and that quality has, as far as possible, been explained by means of its component parts, so that we may now see what the noble man is; it now seems good to proceed to that part of the text which begins, 'the soul whom this goodness doth adorn'; in which are shown the tokens by which the noble man who has been described can be recognized. And this part has two divisions; in the first it is affirmed that this nobility shines with unmistakable brilliance through the whole life of a noble man; in the second, nobility is shown specifically in each of her splendours; and this second portion begins, 'obedient, suave, and quick to shame.'

With regard to the first portion we must know that this

divine seed, of which we have spoken above, immediately sprouts in her soul, putting forth and, in different ways, entering into all the faculties of the soul according to the needs of each. It sprouts in the Vegetative, Sensitive, and Rational parts of the nature; and it ramifies through the virtues of all these parts, guiding them severally to their perfection, and uplifting itself in them continually up to that point at which, together with that part of our soul which never dies, it returns to heaven to the most high and glorious Sower. And the text says this in that first part of which we have spoken.

Afterwards, when it says 'Obedient, suave, and quick to shame', and so on, it shows how we may recognize the man who is noble by outward tokens, which are the divine operation of this excellence. And this portion has four subdivisions according as nobility operates through four 'ages', that is to say, through adolescence, youth, age, and decline. And the second subdivision begins, 'In youth temperate and brave,' the third, 'And in her old age,' the fourth, 'afterwards in the fourth stage of life.'

Such is the meaning of this part of the text generally. With regard to this we should know that every effect, so far as it is an effect, receives the likeness of its cause so far as it is possible to retain it. Therefore, inasmuch as our life, as has been said, and also the life of every living thing here below is caused by the heaven, and the heaven reveals itself to all such like effects not by the completed circle of its revolution, but by a portion of it; it follows that the initial movement of the life must be upwards; and as the heaven, like an arch mounting up and then turning back, controls all lives (I say controls the lives both of men and of all other living things), they needs must, as it were, be assimilated to the

likeness of an arch." Returning, therefore, to human life only, which is our present concern, I affirm that it goes on its way, after the likeness of this arch, mounting up and then descending.

And we must know that this arch above described would be uniform, if the matter of the constitution sown in us did not interfere with the rule of human nature. And since the radical moisture which is the substance and nourishment of the heat that is our life is less or more, and is of better quality, and is more durable in one effect than in another, it comes to pass that the arch of life is of greater or less span in the life of one man than in that of another. There is a kind of death which is violent, or accelerated by accidental infirmity; but only that death which is commonly called 'natural' is that 'boundary' of which it is said in the words of the Psalmist, 'Thou hast set a boundary which cannot be passed.' And since the Master of human life, Aristotle, was acquainted with this arch of which we are now speaking, he seems to indicate that our life is nothing but an ascent and a descent. He therefore says in his treatise *On Youth and Old Age* that youth is nothing but increase of life. It is difficult to ascertain where the highest point of the arch is situated on account of the inequality mentioned above; but in the majority of lives it is reached, as I believe, between the thirtieth and the fortieth year. And I believe that in those who have the most perfect natural constitution it is reached in the thirty-fifth year. And I incline to this belief for the following reason. Our Saviour Jesus Christ had the most perfect natural constitution, and He willed to die in the thirty-fifth year of His life, because it was not fitting that His divine nature should thus begin to decline. Nor can we believe that He would not have willed to remain

alive until He reached the highest point of life after having existed here in the low estate of boyhood. And this is made plain to us by the hour of the day at which He died, because He wished to bring this into keeping with His life; wherefore Luke says that it was about the sixth hour when He died, meaning that it was the highest point of the day. Hence we may tolerably well understand from this that the highest point of the life of Christ was in His thirty-fifth year.

This arch indeed is not only designated in writings by reference to its middle point; but is divided into four parts corresponding to the four combinations of the contrary qualities which enter into our composition. To these combinations, I mean, to each in turn, one part of our term of life seems to be appropriated, and these parts are called four ages. The first is Adolescence, which is appropriated to warm and moist; the second is Youth, which is appropriated to warm and dry, the third is Old Age, which is appropriated to cold and dry; the fourth is Decline, which is appropriated to cold and moist, as Albert writes in the fourth book of the *Meteor.*

And these stages are likewise found in the year, in Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. So too in the day, that is, up to Tierce, and later up to None, leaving Sext between these parts for a reason that is easily apprehended, and afterwards up to Vespers and from Vespers onward. And therefore the heathen say that the chariot of the sun had four horses; the first they called Eous, the second Pyroeis, the third Aethon, the fourth Phlegon, as Ovid writes in the second book of the *Metamorphoses*, concerning the parts of the day. And in short we must know that, as has been said above in the sixth chapter of the third Tractate, the Church, in marking the temporal hours of the day, of which

there are twelve in each day, uses long or short hours, according to the length of the solar day ; and since the sixth hour, that is, midday, is the noblest in the whole day, and most replete with virtue, she brings her hours near to this on both sides, that is, before and after midday, as far as she can. And therefore the office of the first portion of the day, namely, Tierce, is said at the end of that portion ; and the office of the third and of the fourth portion are said at the beginning. And therefore Mid Tierce is said before the bell is rung for that portion, and Mid None after it is rung for that portion, and so with Mid Vespers. And, therefore, let every one know that the proper None ought always to be rung at the beginning of the seventh hour of the day ; and let this suffice for the present digression.

XXIV. Returning to our main subject, I affirm that human life is divided into four ages. The first is called Adolescence, that is, the increase of life ; the third Youth (*Gioventute*), that is, the age which can be helpful (*giovare*), in other words, can bestow perfection ; and so this age is deemed perfect, because no one can give except what he has ; the third is called Old Age ; the fourth Decline, as has been said above.

About the first age no one doubts, but every one agrees that it lasts till the twenty-fifth year. And since our soul up to that period is bent on the growth and beautifying of the body, whence many great changes take place in a man's person, the rational part cannot perfectly exercise discrimination. Wherefore the Law ordains that before the twenty-fifth year a man cannot do certain things without a guardian of ripe age.

As to the duration of the second age, which is indeed the

highest point of our life, many different opinions are held. But setting aside what philosophers and physicians write about it, and having recourse to my own reason, I say that in the majority (who in all cases decide and ought to decide our estimate of what is natural) this age lasts twenty years. And the following reason guides me to this conclusion. If the highest point of the arch of life is in the thirty-fifth year, this age ought to descend as much as it rises. And this rise and descent form, as it were, the handle of a bow in which only a slight curvature is discernible. We therefore hold that Youth is completed in the forty-fifth year.

And as Adolescence lasts for twenty-five years, and goes on rising up to youth, so the descent, that is, Old Age, is a period of similar length following after Youth. And so Old Age comes to an end in the seventieth year.

But Adolescence does not begin with the dawn of life, if we take it in the sense just ascribed to it, but nearly eight months after its dawn, and our nature is eager to ascend, but checks itself in descending, because the natural warmth is diminished and becomes less potent, and the moisture becomes densified not by increase of quantity, but by change of quality, so that it is less vaporous and easy to be consumed. For this reason it happens that after old age there remain to us in quantity perhaps ten years of life, a little more or less. And this period we call Decline. Hence we are told of Plato, who may be said to have had the best natural endowment, both from his own perfection and from his cast of countenance, which made Socrates fall in love with him when first he saw him, that he lived eighty-one years, as Tully attests in his treatise *On Old Age*. And I believe that if Christ had not been crucified, and had lived through that space of time which His life could have traversed in the

course of nature, He would have been translated in His eighty-first year from the mortal body into the immortal.

However, as has been said above, these Ages may be longer or shorter according to our complexion and constitution ; but whatever these may be, it seems to me, as has been said, that this ratio should be maintained in all men; I mean such ratio as in all cases makes the stages of life longer or shorter according as the whole duration of the natural life remains unimpaired. Through all these ages, this nobility of which we are speaking shows its effects diversely in the soul that is ennobled ; and this is what the portion of the text about which we are now writing designs to show. Here we must know that our nature when good and upright proceeds reasonably in man (just as we see the nature of plants proceed in them) ; and therefore some customs and some kinds of behaviour are more reasonable at one age than at another, and in these the soul that is ennobled goes on its way in simple fashion, making use of her activities at their proper times and ages, according as they are adapted to produce her ultimate fruit. And Tully in his book *On Old Age*, expresses his agreement with this. And disregarding the figurative language which Virgil uses in the *Aeneid* concerning the different progress of the ages, and disregarding what Aegidius the Hermit tells us in the first part of his treatise, *On the Regiment of Princes*, and disregarding the reference to this subject by Tully in his book *On the Offices*, and following only what the unaided reason can perceive, I say that this first age is the door and path by which any one can enter upon this excellent life of ours. And this entry must needs be provided with certain things which kindly Nature, who never fails in things necessary, gives to us : as we see that she gives leaves to the vine for



the defence of the fruit, and tendrils by which the vine defends and binds fast her weakness so that she bears up the weight of her fruit.

Kindly Nature then bestows on Adolescence four things necessary for entering into the city of the good life. The first is Obedience, the second Suavity, the third Sense of Shame, and fourth Comeliness of Body, as the text says in the first section. We must therefore know that just as a man who has never been into a city could not keep in the right path without instruction from one who had already trodden it; so the youth who enters into the bewildering forest of this life could not keep the right path unless it was pointed out to him by his elders. Nor would it avail for them to point it out unless he were obedient to their commands; and therefore obedience was deemed necessary for this age. Somebody might indeed say as follows: 'Can then a man be called obedient who shall obey evil commands, as well as one who shall obey good?' I answer that this will not be obedience but transgression: for if a King commands one thing, and a slave commands another, the slave is not to be obeyed, as this would be to disobey the King, and so would be transgression. And therefore Solomon when he intends to correct his son says to him (and this is his first precept) 'Hear, my son, the instruction of thy father'. And afterwards he straightway withdraws him from the bad advice and instruction of others, saying, 'Let not sinners have power to entice thee with flatteries or with delights, so that thou shouldst walk with them.' Therefore, just as a man so soon as he is born takes to his mother's breast, so he ought, as soon as any gleam of mind appears in him, to turn to the correction of his father, and his father to give instruction to him. And let the father take care that he does not himself

by his acts set an example to his son which shall contradict the words of his correction ; for we see that every son naturally looks more attentively at the footsteps of his father than at those of any one else. And therefore the Law, which takes forethought for this, says and commands that the person of a father ought always to appear sacred and honourable to his sons ; and thus it appears that obedience is necessary at that age. And therefore Solomon writes in the *Proverbs* ‘ that he who humbly and obediently endures the righteous reproof of him who chastens him shall be glorious’, and he says ‘ shall be ’ in order to let it be understood that he is speaking to one who is in his adolescence, because he cannot yet be glorious at his present age. And if any one should make this objection, that the words cited are said only of a father and not of any one else, I reply that obedience to a father is that by which all other obedience is measured. Hence the Apostle says to the *Colossians*, ‘ Children, obey your fathers in all things, for this is the will of God.’ And if the father is no longer living, this obedience must be referred to him who by the father in his last will is bequeathed as a father ; and if the father die Intestate obedience is referred to him to whom the Law commits the son’s government. And in the next place teachers and elders are to be obeyed, to whom in a certain fashion a man seems to be committed by his father or by him who stands in the place of a father. But since this present chapter has been long on account of the useful digressions it contains, the other points must be discussed in another chapter.

XXV. Not only must the soul be well endowed by nature in Adolescence, and obedient : it must also be ‘suave’. This is that other thing which is necessary at this age for

rightly entering into the gate of youth. It is necessary because we cannot have a perfect life without friends, as Aristotle lays down in the eighth book of the *Ethics*; and the greater part of our friendships appear to be sown in this earliest age, because in it a man begins to be gracious or the contrary. This graciousness is acquired by suave behaviour, that is, by pleasant and courteous speech, and pleasant and courteous service and action. And therefore Solomon says to his son, when growing to manhood: 'The scorner God scorns, and to the meek God will give grace,' and elsewhere he says, 'Remove evil lips from thee, and let froward actions be far from thee.' Whence it appears that this suavity is necessary as has been said.

Moreover, the feeling of Shame is also necessary at this age: and therefore a good and noble nature exhibits it at this age as the text says. And since the sense of shame is the most obvious sign of nobility in Adolescence, because then it is in the highest degree necessary for laying a good foundation of our life, which is the aim of a noble nature, we must give some diligence to speak of it. I say that by the Sense of Shame I mean three emotions necessary for a good foundation of our life. The first is Awe, the second is Modesty, the third is Shamefacedness, although the common people do not discern this distinction. And all three are necessary at this age for the following reason: at this age it is necessary to feel reverence and desire for wisdom; at this age it is necessary to be under control so as not to transgress; at this age it is necessary to be penitent for a fault so as not to fall into the habit of committing it. And all these results are produced by the aforesaid emotions which are commonly called the Sense of Shame.

For Awe is a certain bewilderment of the mind at seeing or hearing great and wonderful things, or feeling them in some way. These, in so far as they are great, make him who feels them reverent towards them : in so far as they appear wonderful, they make him who feels them desirous of knowing them. And therefore Kings of old put magnificent works of gold and precious stones, and skilful workmanship into their palaces, in order that those who saw them might become awestruck, and therefore reverent and anxious to be informed of the honourable estate of the King. And therefore Statius, the sweet poet, in the first book of his *Theban History* says that when Adrastus, King of the Argives, saw Polynices clad in a lion's skin, and Tydeus cloaked with the hide of a wild boar, and called to mind the answer which Apollo had given him concerning his daughters, he became awestruck, and therefore more reverent and desirous of knowledge.

Modesty is the shrinking of the mind from foul things together with the fear of falling into them ; as we see in virgins and good women, and in growing youth, that they are so modest as not only on occasions when they are tempted to commit a fault, but even where the mere imagination of sensual pleasure may be entertained, to have their faces painted with pallid or ruddy hues. Whence the above-mentioned poet says in the first books of the *Thebes*, just quoted, that when Acerta the nurse of Argia and Deiphyle, daughters of King Adrastus, brought them before the eyes of their revered father into the presence of the two strangers, Polynices and Tydeus, the maidens became pale and ruddy, and their eyes turned their gaze from all others and kept themselves fixed on their father's face alone, as if they were safe there. How many faults does this modesty check ! How many

disgraceful deeds and proposals does it silence! How many disgraceful desires does it bridle! How many temptations to evil does it discountenance, not only in the person who is modest but in him who looks on such an one! How many foul words does it repress! For, as Tully says in the first book *On the Offices*, 'There is no foul act which it would not be foul to name.' Moreover, a man who is modest and noble never says a word which would not be seemly in a woman. Ah, how ill it becomes a man who goes in quest of honour, to mention things which would be unbecoming on the lips of any woman.

The Sense of Shame is the fear of incurring dishonour by the commission of a fault. And from this fear springs such repentance for a fault that the bitterness of it is a chastisement, which deters from sinning further. Wherefore the same poet in the same passage says that, when Polynices was asked by King Adrastus who he was, he hesitated at first to say through Shame for the sin he had committed against his father, and also on account of the sins of Oedipus his father, which seemed to survive to the shame of the son. And he did not name his father, but his ancestors, and his native country and his mother. Hence it is easily seen that the Sense of Shame is necessary at that age.

And the noble nature at that age exhibits not only Obedience, Suavity, and Sense of Shame, but also Beauty and Agility of body, as the text affirms when it says, 'And with beauty doth her person ornament.' (This word 'ornament' is a verb, not a noun; a verb, I say, in the third person present of the indicative.) Here we must know that this effect of Adolescence is necessary for the excellence of our life, for our soul carries on a great part of its operations by the instrumentality of the body, and it carries them on well when the

body has its different parts well adjusted and arranged. And it is then beautiful as a whole and in all its parts, when it is well adjusted and disposed, for the proper arrangement of our members confers the enjoyment of an indescribable and wonderful harmony; and their right disposition, that is, their health, diffuses over them a colour pleasant to behold. And to say that a noble nature embellishes the body it inhabits and makes it trim and alert, is as much as to say that it puts it into perfect order. And this with the other matters on which we have discoursed seems to be necessary for Adolescence. All these the noble soul, that is, the noble nature, as a thing which, as has been said, is sown by divine Providence, designs in the first instance for that age.

XXVI. Now that we have discussed the first section of this part which indicates the means by which we can recognize the man who is noble by the outward signs of nobility, we must go on to the second section, which begins 'In Youth temperate and brave'. This therefore affirms that as the noble nature in Adolescence shows herself 'Obedient, suave, and quick to shame', beautifying her own person, so in Youth she is 'temperate and brave', 'full of love', 'courteous' and 'loyal'. These five things appear to be and are necessary for our perfection, so far as we have regard to ourselves. And with respect to this it should be observed that everything which the noble nature prepares in the first age, is made ready and ordered by the forethought of universal Nature which disposes the particular nature for its own perfection. This perfection of ours may be considered under two aspects. It may be considered so far as it has relation to ourselves; and it must be possessed in our youth, which is the culminating point of our life. This perfection

may also be considered in its relation to others. And because a man must first be perfect, and afterwards impart his perfection to others, he must needs have this secondary perfection subsequently to that age, namely, in Old Age, as will be said below.

Here, therefore, we must recall to mind what was discoursed above in the twenty-second chapter of this book regarding Desire, which is born in us from our very beginning. This Desire never does anything else but pursue and flee ; and whenever Desire pursues what it should, and as far as it should, and flees what it should, and as far as it should, a man keeps within the limits of his perfection. This Desire, however, must be ridden by Reason. For as an unbridled horse, however noble he may be by nature, does not guide himself aright without a good rider ; so also this Desire, which is called irascible or lustful, however noble it may be, should obey Reason. Reason, like a good horseman, directs Desire with bridle and spur. It uses the bridle when Desire is pursuing (and this bridle is called Temperance, which prescribes the limits up to which pursuit may be carried) ; it uses the spur when Desire flees, in order to turn it back to the spot from which it wishes to flee (and this spur is called Courage or Magnanimity, the virtue which points out the spot where we ought to take our stand and to fight). And Virgil, our greatest poet, shows that Aeneas was thus unbridled in that part of the *Aeneid* where this stage of life is depicted, the part comprised in the fourth and fifth and sixth books of the poem. And what a bridling was that when Aeneas after he had received such pleasure from Dido, as will be told later in the seventh Tractate, and was experiencing such enjoyment with her, tore himself from her that he might follow an honourable and laudable and profitable course, as

is written in the fourth book of the *Aeneid*. What a spurring was that when the same Aeneas had the fortitude to enter alone with the Sibyl into Hell in quest of the soul of his father Anchises, encountering such dangers as are set forth in the sixth book of the aforesaid history. By this it is plain how necessary it is for our perfection that we should be brave and temperate in our youth. And goodness of nature produces and displays this condition, as the text expressly says.

Moreover it is necessary for this age and its perfection to be loving; since it is fitting to it that it should look before and after, like a thing which is in the meridian of a circle. It is meet for a young man to love his elders, from whom he has received his being, and nurture, and teaching, so that his age may not appear ungrateful. It is necessary for him to love his juniors in order that through loving them he may impart to them of his kindnesses, and on this account may by them be supported and honoured when his prosperity wanes. And the above-named poet, in the sixth book mentioned above, shows that Aeneas had this love, when he left the aged Trojans behind in Sicily committed to Acestes' care, and put an end to their toils, and when in Sicily also he gave instruction to his young son Ascanius with the other growing youth in tournament. Wherefore it appears that love is necessary for this age as the text says.

Moreover it is necessary for this age to be courteous; for although at every age it is a fine thing to be of courteous manners, for this age it is most of all necessary, because if it were not so Old Age could not have such manners by reason of the gravity and the sternness which is expected of it; and still less could Decline have them. And that loftiest poet, in the sixth book above mentioned, shows that Aeneas had this courtesy, when he says that King Aeneas in order



to pay honour to the corpse of Misenus, who had been Hector's trumpeter, and had afterwards commended himself to the King, girt himself and took his axe to help hew the logs for the fire which was to burn the dead body, according to their custom. Wherefore it is easily apparent that courtesy is necessary for Youth ; and therefore the noble soul displays courtesy at that age as has been said.

Further, it is necessary for this age to be loyal. Loyalty consists in following and putting into practice what the laws enjoin, and this specially befits the young man. For the growing youth, as has been said, on account of his minority in years deserves to be readily forgiven ; the old man on account of his greater experience ought to be just, and ought not to be the lackey of the law, save in so far as his own upright judgement and the law are almost entirely at one ; and he ought to follow his own just mind almost independently of any law, which the young man cannot do. And let it be enough for the young man to follow the law, and let him take delight in thus following it, as the aforesaid poet says in the above-mentioned fifth book that Aeneas did, when he held the games in Sicily on the anniversary of his father's death, and loyally gave to each winner what he had promised as a prize, according to their ancient custom which was their law. Wherefore it is obvious that for this age Loyalty, Courtesy, Love, Courage, and Temperance, are necessary, as the text which is now the subject of our discourse affirms ; and therefore the noble soul exhibits them all.

XXVII. We have now quite sufficiently reviewed and discussed that section which the text inserts in order to set forth those good qualities which the noble soul lends to manhood ; wherefore it seems good now to bestow attention

on the third portion which begins, 'And in her old age.' In this part the text designs to set forth those qualities which a noble nature displays and ought to possess in the third age, that is, 'Old Age.' And it says that in Old Age the noble soul is prudent and just and bountiful, and rejoices to say of others what is good and helpful for them, and to hear the same, that is to say, that it is fair-spoken. And indeed these four virtues are most suitable to this age. •

And in order to perceive this we must know that, as Tully says in his book *On Old Age*: 'Our age has a definite course and a single path, that prescribed by our better nature, and in every part of our life there is a season for certain things.' Wherefore just as to Adolescence is given the means of arriving at perfection and maturity (as was said above), so to Youth perfection and maturity are given in order that the sweetness of its fruit may be profitable to itself and to others; for, as Aristotle says, 'man is a social animal,' wherefore it is required of him that he shall be useful not only to himself but to others. Hence it is read of Cato, that he deemed himself to be born not only for himself but for his country and for the whole world. Therefore, a man's own perfection which is acquired in youth, ought to be succeeded by that perfection which sheds light not only on himself but on others; and a man ought to open out as a rose which can no longer stay shut, and to diffuse the perfume which is generated within: and this should take place in that third age which is our present theme. It is meet, therefore, that a man should be prudent, that is, wise; and for becoming wise there are required good memory of things that have been seen, good apprehension of things present, and good foresight of things future. And as the Philosopher says in the sixth book of the *Ethics*, 'it is impossible for a man to be

wise unless he is good'; and therefore a man who proceeds with subterfuge and deceit is not to be called wise but astute; for just as no one would call a man wise who knew how to hit the pupil of an eye with a dagger, so a man is not to be called wise who knows well how to commit a bad action, by doing which he always wrongs himself before he wrongs another. If we look closely, Prudence is the source of right counsel which guides the man himself and others to a prosperous end in human affairs and actions. And this is that gift which Solomon when he saw himself set over the government of the people asked of God, as is written in the third book of the Kings. Nor does a prudent man such as this wait until some one asks him 'Counsel me'; but looking forward on his behalf, without being asked, he counsels him; as a rose which renders up her fragrance not only to him who goes to her for it, but also to any one who passes her way. Here some physician or lawyer may say, 'shall I then carry my advice and bestow it even where I am not asked for it, and have no profit from my art.' I answer as saith our Lord, 'Freely I receive if it is freely given.' I say, therefore, good Sir Lawyer, that those counsels which have no relation to thy art, and which come only from that good sense which God has given thee, (and this is that Prudence of which I am speaking), thou shouldst not sell to the children of Him who gave it to thee; but those counsels which are related to thy art which thou hast purchased, thou mayest sell: but not so that thou oughtest not at times to pay tithe of them and give to God, that is, to those poor wretches who have nothing but the divine bounty left to them.

It is also meet at this age to be just in order that a man's judgements and his authority should be a light and a law to others. And because this unique virtue, namely, Justice,

was perceived by philosophers of old to show itself in perfection at this age, they committed the government of the state to those who were of this age, and therefore the assemblage of rulers was called a 'Senate'. O wretched, wretched country of mine! What pity for thee touches my heart whenever I read or write things that bear on civil government! But since Justice will be treated in the last Tractate but one of this work, let it suffice here for the present to have touched thus lightly upon it.

It is also meet at this age to be bountiful, because a thing is then seasonable when it best satisfies the requirements of its own nature; and the requirements of bounteousness are never so well satisfied as at this age. For if we would rightly regard the procedure of Aristotle in the fourth book of the *Ethics* and of Tully in his book *On the Offices*, bounteousness should be so displayed as to time and place that the bounteous man shall not injure either himself or others. It is impossible to have this quality without prudence and without justice, and these virtues cannot in the usual course of nature be possessed in their perfection before this age. O ill-starred and misbegotten men who despoil widows and wards, who plunder the weak, who rob and seize other men's rights, and with these equip banquets, give presents of horses and arms, goods and money, rear wonderful buildings, and deem yourselves to be acting bounteously! And what is this but to take the cloth from off the altar, and to cover with it the robber and his table? Not otherwise, ye tyrants, ought a man to laugh at your gifts than at a robber who should bring his guests to his house, and should spread on the table the napkin stolen from off the altar with the marks of the Church still upon it, and should think that others will not perceive them. Hear ye obstinate men what Tully says

against you in the book *On the Offices*: 'There are in sooth many desirous of being conspicuous and illustrious who take from one in order to give to another, believing that they will be deemed good if they enrich their friends, whatever be the means they adopt for this end. But this is as contrary to what is right as it possibly can be.'

It is also meet at this age to be affable, ready to converse on what is good and to listen to those who do the same ; since it is then well to converse on what is good when such talk finds a listener. And this age carries with it a shade of authority on account of which men seem more disposed to listen to it than to any earlier age. And it seems that this age must know more witty and good stories through long experience of life. Wherefore Tully, speaking in the person of the elder Cato, says in his book *On Old Age*, 'The desire of conversing and the pleasure of conversing more than I was wont have grown upon me.'

And that all four qualities are suitable to this age Ovid teaches us in the seventh book of the *Metamorphoses*, in that fable, in which he describes how Cephalus came from Athens to King Aeacus for help in the war which he was waging against the Cretans. He shows how the aged Aeacus was Prudent when, having lost almost his whole people by a pestilence due to the corruption of the air, he wisely had recourse to God, and asked Him to restore his dead people ; and through his good sense, which led him to be patient and to turn to God, his people were restored to him more numerous than before. He shows that Aeacus was Just when he says that he divided and distributed his desolate country among his new people. He shows that Aeacus was Open-handed when he said to Cephalus after his request for help, 'O Athens, ask not succour of me, but take it for yourselves, and say

not to yourselves "Precarious are the forces of this island". And this is the whole state of my affairs : we have no stint of troops, rather have we enough and to spare, and the foe is mighty, and the moment is opportune for giving help, and leaves no excuse.' " Ah, how many points are to be noted in this answer, but to one who can understand aright let it suffice that the case be here put as Ovid puts it. He shows that the King was Fair-spoken when he carefully recites and in a long speech describes to Cephalus the history of the pestilence that befell his people, and their restoration. Thus it is sufficiently clear that to this age four qualities are suitable, wherefore the noble nature displays them in herself as the text affirms. And in order that the example above mentioned may be the more impressive, the poet says of King Aeacus that he was father of Telamon, Peleus, and Phocus ; and from Telamon Ajax sprung, and from Peleus Achilles.

XXVIII. After the section we have discussed we must now go on to the last, that is, to the section which begins, 'Afterwards in the fourth stage of life,' by which the text aims at showing how the noble soul behaves in the last age, namely, Decline. And it says that she does two things ; firstly, that she returns to God as to that haven whence she set forth when she came to enter on the sea of this life ; secondly, that she blesses the journey which she has finished, because it has been straight and good, and free from bitterness of storm. And here we must know, as Tully says in his book *On Old Age*, 'a natural death is, as it were, a haven for us and resting-place after a long voyage.' And so just as a good mariner when he draws near to the harbour lets down his sails, and enters it gently with slight headway

on ; so we ought to let down the sails of our worldly pursuits, and turn to God with all our understanding and heart, so that we may come to that haven with all composure and with all peace. And our own nature gives us a good lesson in gentleness, in so far as there is in such a death no pain, nor any bitterness ; but as a ripe apple lightly and without violence detaches itself from its bough, so our soul severs itself without suffering from the body where it has dwelt. Wherefore Aristotle in his book *On Youth and Old Age* says that ‘ death is without sadness when it takes place in old age ’. And just as a man who comes off a long journey, before he enters the gate of his own city, is met by her citizens, so the noble soul is met (as it should be) by the citizens of the life immortal. And they meet her by means of her good actions and reflections. For, having already rendered herself up to God and withdrawn from worldly thought and things, she seems to see those whom she believes to be with God. Hear what Tully says, speaking in the character of Cato the elder : ‘ I rise up with the greatest eagerness to see your fathers whom I loved ; and not only these, but also those of whom I have heard speak.’ The noble soul therefore gives herself up to God at this age and awaits the end of this life with much longing ; she seems to herself to be departing from an inn and returning to her own mansion ; to be coming off her journey and returning to the city ; to be leaving the ocean and returning to port. O vile wretches who run into this port with sails full set, and in the harbour where ye ought to repose, wreck and destroy yourselves by the force of the wind at the spot to which ye have so long been journeying ! Truly the knight Lancelot, and our noblest of Latins, Guido of Montefeltro, did not wish to enter port with sails full set. These noble men indeed shortened the sail of their worldly occupations,

for in their extreme age they surrendered themselves to religion, laying aside all worldly delights and pursuits. And no one ought to excuse himself by reason of the marriage tie which still binds him in extreme age : for not only does he who assumes a habit and rule of life like that of St. Augustine, or St. Francis, or St. Dominic, join the ranks of the professed, but a man may also become truly and properly professed while married, for God does not require us to be professed save in heart. And therefore St. Paul says to the Romans, ‘ He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh ; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit, and not in the letter whose praise is not of men, but of God.’

And the noble soul at that age also ‘blesseth the times gone by’, and well may she bless them, because when she turns her memory back to them she is reminded of her upright doings, without which she could not come to the haven to which she draws nigh, freighted with so much wealth or so much gain. And she behaves like the good merchant, who, when he comes near to port balances his profits and says, ‘ If I had not journeyed by such a road, I should not have this treasure, nor should I have aught wherewith to enjoy myself in my city to which I am drawing nigh ’ ; and therefore he blesses the journey he has made.

And that these two qualities are suitable to this age that great poet Lucan tells us under a figure in the second book of his *Pharsalia*, when he says that Marcia returned to Cato, and besought and prayed him that he should take her back again. This Marcia signifies the noble soul, and we can thus show the correspondence of the figure with the truth. Marcia was a virgin, and in that state signifies Adolescence ;



afterwards she came to Cato, and in that state signifies Youth; she then brought forth children by whom are signified the virtues which are said above to be suitable for the young; she then left Cato and married Hortensius, thus signifying that Youth has departed and Old Age has come. Hortensius dies, by which is signified the end of Old Age; and Marcia now widowed (which widowhood signifies Decline), at the beginning of her widowhood returns to Cato, by which she signifies that the noble soul at the beginning of Decline returns to God. And what earthly man is so worthy to signify God as Cato? Certainly none.

And what says Marcia to Cato? 'While I had blood in me,' that is Youth; 'while I had strength for motherhood,' that is Old Age, which indeed is the mother of all the other virtues, as has been shown above, 'I carried out and fulfilled all thy commandments,' signifying that the soul held fast to all the pursuits of a citizen. She says, 'I took two husbands,' that is, 'I was fruitful at two periods of life.' 'Now that my womb,' Marcia adds, 'is weary, and I am exhausted for child-bearing, I return to thee, no longer fit to be given to another spouse,' that is to say, the noble soul discerning that she no longer has any womb to bear fruit, in other words, when her members feel that they have become enfeebled, turns to God, to Him who has no need of bodily members. And Marcia says, 'Give me the pact of our ancient wedlock, give me only the name of marriage' (meaning that the noble soul says to God, 'O my Lord, give me now repose'), 'grant to me at least that in such life as I have left, I may be called thine'; and Marcia adds, 'Two reasons move me to ask this: first, that after my death it may be said that I died Cato's wife, and secondly, that after my death it may be said that thou didst not drive

me from thee, but gave me in marriage with thy goodwill.' By these two reasons the noble soul is moved, and wishes to depart from this life the spouse of God, and to show that God's own creature was pleasing to Him. O ill-starred and misbegotten men who wish when they depart from this life to be styled by the name of Hortensius rather than by that of Cato ! With whose name it is well to end what it is meet to say about the tokens of nobility because in him nobility herself displays them all through all periods of life.

XXIX. Since both the text has been explained and those tokens indicated which appear at every stage of life in the noble man, who may be recognized by them and cannot exist without them, any more than the sun can exist without light or fire without heat ; the text at the end of the description of Nobility, cries aloud to all the world and says, 'O all ye who have hearkened to me, see how many be they who are deceived' ; namely, they who because they are of famous and ancient lineage, and are descended from excellent forefathers believe themselves noble, although they have not nobility in themselves. And here two questions arise to which at the end of this Tractate it is well to attend.

Messer Manfredi da Vico, who now is styled Pretor and Prefect, might say : ' Whatever I may be in myself, I recall to men's minds and represent my ancestors who by their nobility earned the office of Prefect, and the right to take part in the coronation of Emperors, and to receive the rose from the Roman Pastor ; honour and reverence from every one are my due.' This is the first question.

The second is that any of the family of San Nazzaro of Pavia, or of the Piscicelli of Naples might say : ' If Nobility is what has been described, namely, a divine seed graciously

planted in the human soul ; and if the family or race, as is plain, has no soul, then no family or race can be called noble ; and this is contrary to the opinion of those who say that our families are the noblest in their respective cities.’

To the first question Juvenal supplies an answer in the *Eighth Satire* where he begins as if exclaiming, ‘ What profit these honours which survive from the men of old, if he who will, array himself in them is an evil liver ; if he who discourses of his ancestors and points to their great and wonderful deeds devotes himself to mean and wretched pursuits ? ‘ But who,’ continues this satirist, ‘ will call a man noble because one generation of his family was excellent, if he is not worthy of that excellent generation ? This is the same as to call a dwarf a giant.’ Afterwards he addresses a man of this sort : ‘ Between you and the statue erected in memory of your ancestor there is no difference except that the head of the statue is of marble, and thy head is alive.’ And in this point (I speak with all due respect) I differ from the poet, for the statue of marble or wood or metal that remains as a memorial of some worthy man produces an effect far different from that produced by his unworthy descendant. The statue always confirms the good opinion entertained by those who have heard the good report of him whose statue it is, and breeds a good opinion of him in all others : an unworthy son or grandson does just the contrary, for he weakens the good opinion of his ancestors in those who have heard of their well-doing ; for some thought of theirs says to them ‘ it cannot be that all that is said of his ancestors can be true, since we see such a plant from their sowing’. Wherefore he who testifies evil against the good should receive not honour but dishonour. Hence Tully says that ‘ the son of a worthy man ought to be careful to testify good of his

father'. Therefore, in my judgement, as he who defames a good man ought to be shunned by every one, and not listened to; so a worthless man descended from good ancestors ought to be scouted by all; and a good man ought to shut his eyes so as not to perceive the reproach that is heaped on goodness, of which the memory alone remains.\* And for the present let this suffice for the first question that was mooted.

In answer to the second question it may be said that a family as such has no soul, and yet it is quite true that it is called, and is, noble in a certain sense. Wherefore we must know that every whole is made up of its parts; and there is one kind of whole which together with its parts has one single essence, as in a man there is one essence of the whole man, and of each of his parts, and whatever is said to exist in a part is said in the same sense to exist in the whole. There is another kind of whole which has not the same essence as the parts, as, for instance, a heap of corn; but that which it has is a secondary essence resulting from the multitude of grains which have a real and primary essence in themselves. And to a whole of this kind the qualities of the parts are thus said to belong secondarily as its essence; so that we speak of a white heap, because the grains which make up the heap are white. This whiteness, however, resides rather in the grains primarily, and secondarily as a result in the whole heap, which may thus in a secondary sense be called white. And in the same way a race or a family may be called noble. Hence we must know that, as in order to make a heap white the white grains must preponderate, so in order to make a family noble, noble men must preponderate in it (by 'preponderate' I mean exceed the others in number), so that excellence with its fair fame shall overshadow and conceal the contrary which is within.

And just as in a white heap of corn it would be possible to take the corn away grain by grain, and replace it by red maize, and all the heap would at last change colour ; so in a noble family it would be possible for the good to die off one by one, and for the bad to be born into it to such an extent that it would change its name and deserve to be called not noble but vile. And let this suffice for an answer to the second question.

XXX. As is pointed out above in the third chapter of this Tractate, this Canzone has three main divisions. Two of these have been discussed, the first beginning with the aforesaid chapter, the second with the sixteenth, so that the discussion of the first is finished in thirteen, that of the second in fourteen chapters, without reckoning two chapters containing the preface to the Tractate on the Canzone. In this thirtieth and final chapter, therefore, we have briefly to discuss the third main division, which was composed as a *tornata* to this Canzone, to serve as a kind of ornament, and begins, ‘against the erring shouldst thou go forth, my song.’ And here especially we should be aware that every good workman endeavours to ennoble and embellish his task at the end as far as he can, in order that it may be more bruited abroad and prized when it leaves his hands. And I purpose, not because I am a good workman, but because I follow his example, to do the same in this portion of my task. I say then, ‘Against the erring, &c.’ These words, ‘Against the erring,’ are a single phrase, and are the name of this Canzone, imitated from the worthy brother, Thomas of Aquino, who gave the name *Against the Heathen* to a book of his which he wrote to confound all those who deviate from our Faith.

I say, then, 'Thou shouldst go forth,' as if meaning 'Thou art now perfect, and the time is come no longer to stay still, but to go forward, for thy enterprise is great. And when thou shalt have come into that region where my Lady dwelleth, tell her thy business.' Here we must remark that as our Lord tells us, we are not to cast pearls before swine, because this does no good to the swine, and ruins the pearls; and as the poet Aesop says in the first of his fables, 'To a cock a kernel of corn is worth more than a pearl, and for this reason he picks up the former and leaves the latter alone.' Moved by this consideration I speak a word of warning and bid my song reveal her errand there where this Lady, I mean Philosophy, shall be found. This noblest Lady will then be found when her chamber is found, namely, the soul in which she lodges. And this philosophy not only lodges in the wise but also, as has been proved above in another Tractate, she is present there wherever the love for her finds lodging. And to all these I bid her disclose her errand because these are they who will profit by her message and will gather it in.

And I say to her, 'Tell this Lady, I go discoursing of thy friend.' Truly Nobility is her friend; for the one is so deeply enamoured of the other, that Nobility is ever calling for her, and Philosophy turns her fondest gaze to no other quarter. Oh, how great, and how beautiful an ornament is this which is bestowed on her at the end of this Canzone, when she is called the friend of her whose own mansion is in the most secret place of the divine Mind.



# NOTES

## TRACTATE I

iii. 50 (p. 39). *dalla buona operazione* has been commonly translated 'by a good action'. The context, however, seems clearly to require the words to be rendered as in the text. The action which becomes famous is the same, whether viewed by a friend or by an enemy, but it becomes famous only when a good construction is put on it in the mind of a friend.

vii. 54-9 (p. 48). The MSS. here read *e l'uomo obediante alla giustizia comanda al peccatore*. These words do not give an adequate sense. The translation follows an emendation of Witte's which cannot be considered certain, but gives exactly the sense required: *e l'uomo è obediante alla giustizia quando fa quello che comanda la Legge, nè più nè meno*.

xiii. 23 (p. 64). *per me non stesse* has been translated in other ways. Literally the words may be rendered 'if it were not accepted, so far as I am concerned'. *Stare* is commonly used in this sense, see IV. xii. 80, xxii. 27, &c. *Per me sta* has almost the same meaning as the Latin *per me licet*.

## TRACTATE II

v. 91-6 (p. 83). The reading in this passage has been a source of perplexity to editors. The manuscript reading is as follows: *che alle sustanze separate convegna pure la specolativa vita; come pure la specolativa convegna loro, pure alla specolazione di certe segue la circolazione del cielo che è del mondo governo*, &c. Almost all editors have hitherto regarded these words as corrupt. But Dr. Moore in the third edition of the Oxford text of Dante has restored the original reading, leaving out *pure* in the first line, and inserting a full stop after *convegna loro*. Dante's meaning is fairly intelligible. Aristotle had affirmed (*Ethics* x. 8) that the sole activity of the Gods was speculative. This Dante accepts,



but points out that the ordered life of a state is constituted by the speculative thought of certain intelligences. This is due to the identification of thought and being in Dante's philosophic system (see Introductory Essay, p. 20). But the intelligences whose thought or conception has no practical result are far more numerous than those whose thought determines the constitution of civil life. The translator has followed Dr. Moore's latest text, only retaining *pure* after *convegna* in the first line.

v. 126 (p. 84). In this passage a comma has been substituted, on Dr. Moore's authority, for a semicolon after *per un poco di splendore* in the Oxford text.

xii. 1-20 (pp. 101, 2). In the rendering of this passage the translator is indebted to an article on Dante's lyrical metres by Mr. C. B. Heberden in the *Modern Language Review* for July, 1908, to which the reader should refer.

### TRACTATE III

Canzone II, line 32 (p. 124). *in quel cb' ella conduce*. The sense of *conduce* is determined by the Commentary ch. xiii, line 112 (p. 174), 'bring in her train'. The moral qualities generally are the beauties of philosophy which is attended by them, because intellectual is the source of moral excellence. *Conduce* has also the same literal meaning in ch. vi, line 123 (p. 147). The soul, which is the form of the body, brings the body in its train, i.e. causes the creation of the body out of its subject matter. The word does not here seem to bear the sense of 'guide' generally attributed to it.

ii. 59-60. The translator has here ventured to depart slightly from the Oxford text, and to borrow a suggestion from the Milanese edition of 1827. The Oxford text runs as follows: *E perocchè nelle bontadi della Natura la ragione si mostra Divina*: the Milanese edition reads *E perocchè nelle bontadi della natura humana la ragione si mostra della divina*. The reading of most MSS. is as follows: *e perocchè nelle bontadi della natura della ragione si mostra la divina vena*, &c. The substitution of *viene* for *vena* seems a certain emendation. *Vena* gives no grammatical construction. The word occurs elsewhere in Dante

only in the literal sense. A solitary figurative use, and that, moreover, applied to the Deity, would be almost inconceivable. The reading *vena* may be partly due to a misunderstanding of *ragione*, which the copyists have wrongly supposed to refer to the reason. If *ragione* be taken to mean the constitution or conception of the Divine mind (compare Canzone III, line 89: *Nobilitate in sua ragione*), the reading *della divina* exhibits the meaning better than the Oxford text. At the same time it is *difficilior lectio*, and makes a less serious change. Dante is affirming that the human will identifies itself as closely as possible with the Divine. God is essentially Being. The human will, therefore, primarily desires to exist, and is most closely united to God by this desire. But God also infuses all other excellences, differentiated according to the nature of the recipient. The attraction men feel for these excellences is due to their source in the divine nature. The insertion of *humana* in line 59 by the Milanese Editors (see p. 308 *infra*) seems unnecessary.

Dante quotes the *Liber de Causis*, *infra* ch. vii, line 17, with reference to the diffusion of excellence by the Primal Goodness over all things. Human excellence of which Dante is specially thinking is of course included in the *bontadi della Natura*. A parallel to the use of *Natura*, first in a general and then in a particular sense without repeating the word, may be found in IV. xxvi. 18, 19.

viii. 175-83. The Oxford text runs as follows: *ma le conaturali, il principio delle quali è per natura del passionato, tutto che molto per buona consuetudine si facciano lievi, del tutto non se ne vanno quanto al primo movimento. Ma vannosene bene del tutto, quanto a durazione, perocchè la consuetudine [non] è equabile alla natura, nella quale è il principio di quelle. Non* (line 181) is found in all the MSS.; but all editors hitherto have rejected it, some omitting it, and others enclosing it in brackets. The translator, with the approval of Dr. Moore, has retained it, inserting a comma instead of a full stop after *movimento* (line 179), and enclosing *ma vannosene bene del tutto, quanto a durazione* in a parenthesis. Dante is distinguishing between vices that depend wholly on habit, and vices which are innate. Change of habit entirely eradicates the former. In the case of the latter it eradicates the bad habit, but does not eradicate the

innate tendency, because an acquired habit is not as strong as nature. The words here enclosed in a parenthesis complete the explanation of *quanto al primo movimento* (line 179). It is quite in accordance with Dante's practice to insert the qualifying clause in a parenthesis. The change suggested by the translator not only retains the reading of the MSS., but appears to be required by the sense. \*

xii. 41-2. *il quale è cominciatore del trattato*. The word *trattato*, which is used in various senses, here refers to that portion of the canzone itself in which the theme is discussed. The different usages of the word *trattato* in the *Convivio* were first pointed out by Dr. Paget Toynbee in *Romania*, vol. xxxii, pp. 565-71.

#### TRACTATE IV

ix. 116-20 (p. 224). The Oxford text runs as follows: *siccome nel trebbiare il formento, che l'arte fa suo strumento del caldo, ch'è naturale qualitate*. Mr. Wicksteed has pointed out that the text as it stands does not give the sense required. The grain is expelled from the husk by the impact of the blow, not by heat. He thinks that the word *fermento* may have been the antecedent to *che l'arte fa*, &c.; and that as in similar cases the copyist, confusing *formento* and *fermento*, may have omitted the intervening words. The translator (with the concurrence of Dr. Moore) has adopted the suggestion that there is here a hiatus in the text.

xiv. 35-9 (p. 242). The Oxford text runs as follows: *e 'l figlio suo fia pur figlio di villano, e così fia anche villano il suo figlio; e così sempre mai non sarà a trovare là dove Nobiltà per processo di tempo si cominci*. There is some difference of reading in lines 35, 36, but all the editors print line 37 *e così sempre mai non sarà*, &c. The translator (with the concurrence of Dr. Moore) has altered the punctuation of line 36 as follows: *e così fia anche villano il suo figlio, e così sempre; mai non sarà*, &c. This gives both the sense required, and an easier construction.

xiv. 58 ff. (p. 243). Some editors have found a difficulty in line 62 *conciossiacosachè è memorata la cosa quanto è migliore*, and have emended it. The translator has followed the Oxford text.

Dante's argument seems to run as follows: 'a long memory is a good quality, and therefore human nature is better where memories are long. There is thus a natural connexion between a long memory and nobility, because a long memory, being a good thing, is productive of good, and should therefore engender nobility which is a good. But on the contrary the adversary supposes that nobility is more readily engendered where memories are short, and human nature inferior.' Dante here does not distinguish between the memory of those who are thought noble, and the memory of those who deem them noble. Such a distinction is not necessary for his purpose. The proper meaning of *smemorare* is 'to lose one's memory', 'become stupid'. *Memorare* never means 'to have a long memory' (see Tramer's Dictionary, s. vv.). This passage is quite intelligible if the words are taken in the ordinary sense.

xiv. 91-6 (p. 244). The text runs as follows: *e in questi altri animali e piante e miniere bassezza e altezza non si noti (perocchè in uno sono naturati solamente ed in eguale stato), e in loro generazione di Nobiltà essere non può, e così nè di viltate*. This passage has been misunderstood both by editors and commentators. In consequence of this misunderstanding the reading has been needlessly changed by Fraticelli and others who have omitted *di* before *Nobiltà*. The words *in loro generazione* cannot be taken together. The right rendering is given by Kannegiesse. The translator has, in order to make the construction clearer, extended the parenthesis inserted in the Oxford text. The meaning would be made clearer if the punctuation were altered in line 94 as follows: *e, in loro, generazione, &c.* It will be remarked that in this passage Dante, regarding nobility and its converse as essentially moral qualities, puts the lower animals on a level with plants and minerals by reason of their incapacity for moral action.

xviii. 38-44 (p. 257). The reading of the MSS. here presents great difficulty. It runs as follows: lines 38-44, *non si procede per necessaria dimostrazione, siccome sarebbe a dire, se il freddo è generativo dell' acqua: e noi vedemo i nuvoli; di sì bella e convenevole induzione; chè se in noi è il principio delle nostre lodi, &c.* This seems untranslatable. The Oxford text is as follows: *non si procede per necessaria dimostrazione; siccome sarebbe a dire, se il*

*freddo è generativo dell' acqua, e noi vedemo i nuvoli ; dice bella e convenevole induzione ; chè se in noi sono più cose laudabili, ed in noi è il principio delle nostre lodi, &c.* The Milanese editors enclose lines 39-41 *Siccome sarebbe . . . nuvoli* in a parenthesis, changing *di sì* into *bensì*. The general sense is fairly clear. Moral virtue and nobility agree in this, viz. that their effects are laudable. But nobility confers praise on men by reason not only of moral virtues, but of other laudable qualities. Hence it is a wider term than virtue, which must accordingly be referred to it. This mode of argument which begins with particulars and refers them to a general principle is an instance of induction. In the same way we refer the discharge of moisture from the clouds to cold, because there are other instances of moisture which are also referable to cold. It does not seem possible to regard lines 39-41 *siccome sarebbe . . . generativo dell' acqua* as an example of necessary proof. It is plainly an instance of induction. The main difficulty of the passage arises from the position of the words *siccome sarebbe . . . nuvoli*. They may have originally been written in the margin of the earliest MS. and have then been inserted in the wrong place by a copyist. They read more like an abbreviated note than a full statement. The translator has endeavoured to reproduce what seems to him to be the meaning of the passage. The words in the translation enclosed in brackets are inserted to complete the sense. As commentators point out, the discharge of the clouds is attributed to cold in *Purg.* v. 109 ff. If a full stop were placed after *dimostrazione* (line 39), and the following clause *siccome sarebbe . . . nuvoli* (lines 39-41) were enclosed in a parenthesis and placed after *induzione* (line 42), this arrangement would give a more satisfactory order. Another suggestion may be hazarded, viz. that the words from *siccome sarebbe*, line 39, to *induzione* are all of them an abbreviated note inserted in the text without expansion. In this case, if they were all included in a parenthesis, and the MS. reading *di sì bella* retained, the construction becomes regular.

xxii. 46 (p. 267). *E non pur negli uomini*, which is nearest to the manuscript reading, and is adopted by Pederzini and Giuliani, has been substituted for *E non pur nelle biade* with Dr. Moore's concurrence.

xxiii. 50-60 (p. 273). This passage presents considerable difficulty, and seems to the translator to have been generally misunderstood. The Oxford text, here translated, runs as follows: *Onde, conciossiacosachè la nostra vita, siccome detto è, e ancora d'ogni viventi quaggiù, sia causata dal cielo; e 'l cielo a tutti questi cotali effetti, non per cercbio compiuto, ma per parte di quello a loro si scopra, e così conviene che 'l suo movimento sia sopra, e siccome uno arco quasi tutte le vite ritiene (e dico le ritiene, sì degli uomini, come degli altri viventi), montando e volgendo, convengono essere quasi ad immagine d'arco assomiglianti.* Misunderstanding has arisen through not perceiving that the words *e così* in line 55 mark the apodosis. A similar use of *e così* is found in III. vii. 83, and in IV. xxvi. 46. There is, therefore, no reason for omitting *e* with Fraticelli and other editors. With this reading, taking the words from *siccome* in line 56, to *vorgendo* in line 59 together, the construction becomes quite regular. The translator has understood *il suo movimento* in line 55 to refer to the life of men, and not to the heaven. Dante appears to mean that in every case living creatures are born under the segment of a circle, though the complete motion of the planet is a circle. The curve described by the segment or arch under which they are born moves upward at first, and then descends. Thus human life has the nature of an arch implanted in it at the moment of its birth, and must, like the curve of an arch, first ascend and then descend.

xxvii. 173-80 (p. 291). Dr. Moore has an interesting note on this passage (*Studies in Dante*, First Series, p. 219), in which he shows that the text of Ovid which Dante used must have differed in some important respects from the present received text. The Oxford text of this passage runs as follows: *O Atene, non domandate a me aiutorio, ma toglietevelo; e non dite a voi dubbiose le forze che ha questa isola, e tutto questo è stato delle mie cose: forse non ci menomano, anzi ne sono a noi di superchio, e lo avversario è grande; e il tempo da dare è bene avventuroso, e senza scusa.* Fraticelli and Pederzini, in order to improve the sense, omit *è* before *stato* in line 176, against the *consensus* of the MSS. If the punctuation were changed as follows: *e non dite a voi dubbiose le forze che ha questa isola. E tutto questo è stato delle mie cose:—forse non ci menomano, anzi ne sono a noi di superchio;*

*e lo avversario è grande, e il tempo da dare è bene avventuroso, e senza scusa*, it would be necessary to retain *è*. The remainder of the sentence after *isola* is Cephalus's own statement of the position of things. The translation follows the proposed emendation.

\* \* The translator is greatly indebted to Mr. W. H. V. Reade for the following note on the meaning and origin of the word *ragione* as employed in Tractate III. ii, line 60, and on the interpretation of that passage; and also for kindly allowing him to print it.

'As regards *ragione*, the word *ratio* assumed in Latin Philosophy all the Aristotelian meanings of λόγος. The exact sense is often hard to render in English. Sometimes the *ratio* is simply the *definition*, but more often it is the special meaning, character, or aspect discerned by the intellect from a certain point of view. Hence the same *res* may have more than one *ratio*, and St. Thomas even teaches that all existing things may be regarded *sub ratione veri* and, again, *sub ratione boni*. Thus, when Aristotle says that the parts of the soul may be only *λόγῳ δύο*, the Latin translation used by Dante (trans. of *Eth. Nic.* i. 1102 a. 30) has *ratione duo*, and St. Thomas says in his Commentary, *duo secundum rationem*. Similarly, when Aristotle says that virtue is *κατὰ μὲν τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ τὸν λόγον . . . μεσότης* (*Eth. Nic.* ii. 1107 a. 6), the translation has "secundum substantiam et rationem quod quid est dicentem . . . medietas", and St. Thomas says:—

"Secundum rationem definitivam est medietas: sed in quantum habet rationem optimi in tali genere . . ." &c.

'He adds also—

"Secundum rationem boni virtus est in extremo sed secundum speciem substantialem est in medio . . ."

'Dante seems to use *ragione* not infrequently in the required sense. Perhaps the best example is *Conv.* III, ch. xi, 12: "*la definizione è quella ragione che 'l nome significa*." Apparently he is quoting the Latin of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* I (Dante calls it Book IV), ch. vii *ὁ γὰρ λόγος, οὗ τὸ ὄνομα σημεῖον, ὁρισμὸς γίγνεται*. A good comment on this is furnished by St. Thomas who, when discussing the question, *utrum bonum secundum rationem sit prius*

*quam ens*, says: "ratio significata per nomen est id quod concipit intellectus de re, et significat illud per vocem" (*Summa Theol.*, Quaestio V, art. 2).

'(N.B. "*bonum secundum rationem*" does not mean "good according to reason"; the question is whether the *ratio boni*, i.e. the notion or concept of *bonum*, is logically prior to that of *ens*, or vice versa, a natural question for St. Thomas, since he teaches (*ibid.*, art. 1) that "*bonum et ens sunt idem secundum rem: sed differunt secundum rationem tantum*".)

'Thus, according to the doctrine of *infusio* (or *influxus*) *bonitatis*, which Dante is explicitly taking from the *Liber de Causis*, every created thing has in itself the *ratio* of the divine *bonitas*, because all things emanate from God and reflect His essential goodness. As a matter of fact, the word *ratio* does not apparently occur in the *De Causis* in the passages to which Dante is referring, but this is only because the terminology of that work is, in the main, of Neo-Platonic origin, and *ratio* is replaced in various ways by *forma*, *modus*, &c. For the same reason St. Thomas does not use *ratio* in his exposition of the *De Causis*, for he almost always keeps closely to the terminology of whatever author he is expounding. But in any of his general philosophical works the doctrine of *bonum* is always influenced by the *De Causis* and the word *ratio* always appears. There are numberless passages which illustrate the point, but the following is typical:—

'*"Deus est bonus per essentiam, omnia vero alia per participationem . . . Igitur nihil dicetur bonum nisi inquantum habet aliquam similitudinem divinae bonitatis. Est igitur ipse bonum omnis boni. Adhuc, cum unumquodque appetibile sit propter finem, boni autem ratio consistat in hoc quod est appetibile, oportet quod unumquodque dicatur bonum vel quia est finis vel quia ordinatur ad finem. Finis igitur ultimus est a quo omnia rationem boni accipiunt. Hoc autem Deus est . . ."* (*Summa contra Gentiles*, i. 40).

'In fact, St. Thomas's whole doctrine of *appetitus* turns on the fact that all things contain in themselves the *ratio boni*, a *similitudo* of the divine *bonitas*—hence all desire is desire for God.'





# INDEX OF SUBJECT-MATTER <sup>1</sup>

Arabic numerals refer to the division of lines in the Oxford Text.

**ACTUALITY**: soul actuality of body III. vi. 112; opposed to potentiality viii. 64; *cf.* III. xi. 54 ff., 158 ff.; xiii. 69; IV. xi. 40, &c. v. God.

**ADOLESCENCE**: ends at twenty-five years IV. xxiv. 12; four things necessary for its excellence, 114; obedience *ib.* ff.; suavity xxv. 3 ff.; sense of shame 23 ff.; modesty 69 ff.; has beauty and activity of body 122 ff. v. Shame.

**AGES**: four ages IV. xxiii. 118; combinations of four qualities in man's composition *ib.*; Adolescence, Youth, Old Age, Decline, xxiv. 3; compared with Cato's Marcia xxviii. 97 ff.

**ANGELS**: are Intelligences II. ii. 62, v. 8; substances separate from matter 6; III. vii. 47; by thought move the heavens II. vi. 151; some affect human life v. 69, 94; others for contemplation only 79; these latter innumerable 109; good and bad created by God III. xii. 67; tenth part lost II. vi. 98 (*v.* Man, *infra*); divided into Hierarchies and Orders 39 ff. (*v.* Toynbee's *Dict. s.v. Gerarchia*); angel appeared to Mary vi. 23; at the Sepulchre IV. xxii. 168. v. Intelligences.

**ANGER**: moderated by good temper IV. xvii. 50; one of two sources of appetite xxvi. 47.

**APPETITE**: good a. of mind from good seed IV. xxi. 120; at first like natural a., afterwards differentiated xxii. 31; natural a. causes men to pursue or avoid xxvi. 36; should be ridden by law 42; springs from anger and concupiscence 47.

<sup>1</sup> This index is intended to supply references to the principal thoughts and philosophic opinions expressed in the *Convivio*. It does not include names of persons, or of works cited, or technical terms. For these the reader is referred to the complete index of proper names appended to the *Oxford Dante*, to the exhaustive catalogue of authors and passages cited in Dante given by Dr. Moore in the first series of his *Studies in Dante*, and to the various information contained in Dr. Toynbee's *Dante Dictionary*.

- ART: one final art IV. vi. 55; all art has limits ix. 15; how far subject to the Master 95; relation with nature 123 ff.
- AUTHORITY: inferior to truth IV. iii. 68; is activity of author w. 15; twofold derivation of author 16 ff.; one refers to poets 36; the other to those worthy of credence 44; that of Aristotle highest 50, 71, 149; philosophical not opposed to imperial 158; imperial for perfecting life ix. 8; for ordaining and enforcing law 88; supreme in technical matters not in things dependent on God or Nature 154 ff. v. Emperor, Philosopher.
- BANQUET: name of treatise I. i. 112; intended for all 80; consists of bread and meat 81; fourteen courses 100; all parts intended to be useful IV. xxii. 7.
- BEAUTY: due to proper correspondence of parts I. v. 95; III. xv. 117; IV. xxv. 130; seen best unadorned I. x. 90; morality is beauty of Philosophy III. xv. 115.
- BODY: simple III. iii. 8; composite 14; animate 21; sensitive 69; rational 86; receives light in different ways vii. 26. v. Soul, Man.
- CAUSE: material, formal, efficient, final IV. xx. 95; more than one efficient c. I. xiii. 25; conveys only what it has in itself II. v. 99; Divine Intellect c. of all 102; III. vi. 46; God first c. ii. 26; differentiae come from secondary c. 29. v. Effect, Nobility.
- CHANGE: ought always to be for the better I. viii. 74; of kinds by continuous and infinite gradations III. vii. 65 ff.; (*alterazione*) united with thing changed IV. x. 89.
- CHURCH: spouse and secretary of Christ II. vi. 34.
- COMPLEXION: of the body affects the mind IV. ii. 59; xx. 71; affects the arch of life xxiii. 67; cf. 115 ff.
- COURAGE: virtue IV. xvii. 30; cardinal virtue of practical life xxii. 111; spur to action xxvi. 54. v. Highmindedness, Youth.
- COURTESY: wider term than generosity II. xi. 59; noble conduct *ib.*; formerly meant custom of courts 64; specially necessary to Youth IV. xxvi. 143.
- DECLINE: last period of life, after seventy IV. xxiv. 56; like sailor returning to port xxviii. 16; or traveller to city 53.
- DESIRE: for existence strongest III. ii. 55; for perfection vi. 72; natural d. carries promise of fulfilment xv. 81; cf. IV. xii. 63; grows from childhood onwards 161 ff. v. Riches.
- DISCERNMENT: fairest branch of reason IV. viii. 1; defined 5.
- EFFECT: some things understood only in e. II. xv. 80; III. viii.

- 143; exists in cause xii. 89; *cf.* IV. xxiii. 47; Canz. iii. 52. *v.* Cause.
- EMPEROR**: necessary for civil life of man IV. iv. 3 ff.; like captain of ship 50 ff.; has general command over human confraternity 64; enacts and enforces law ix. 88; rider of human will 102. *v.* Authority.
- END**: supreme end of human life IV. vi. 4, 59 ff.
- ENVY**: between equals I. iv. 43; not between saints III. xv. 102.
- EYE**: of sense and of reason I. xi. 15; sees along a straight line II. x. 35; eyes of the Lady are her demonstrations xvi. 27; III. xv. 13. *v.* Vision.
- FAME**: how generated I. iii. 49 ff.; exaggerates both evil and good iv. 2.
- FEELING** (or *Passion*): six p. mentioned by Aristotle III. viii. 83; natural and habitual 170; piety not a p. II. xi. 43; shame a complex p. includes awe etc. IV. xxv. 33.
- FOREKNOWLEDGE**: does not imply predestination III. xii. 68; of evil should not hinder good 75.
- FRIENDSHIP**: natural between all I. i. 55; is sameness of will vi. 35; likeness necessary III. i. 40; difference of rank, how compensated 68; comes from love of truth and virtue iii. 87; xi. 91, 114; is more than mere universal f. 68; form and matter of f. 132; makes the many one IV. i. 6. *v.* Love.
- GOD**: wills His own existence III. ii. 51; shows Himself in all natural excellence 60; cause of all things vi. 46; loves human beings most 96; bestows benefits differently on different creatures vii. 46 ff.; solely intellectual 64; known only by His effects viii. 143; not known in Himself xv. 105; sees things and differences in Himself xii. 86; highest wisdom, love, and actuality 97; sheds light both directly and reflected xiv. 32; infinite in capacity IV. ix. 31; creator of natural law 64; giver of nobility xx. 55; xxii. 176; is man's highest beatitude 196; would have men inwardly religious xxviii. 74. *v.* Trinity.
- HABIT**: necessary for virtue, &c. III. xiii. 82; *cf.* IV. xvii. 71; comparison with innate qualities III. viii. 160 ff.
- HAPPINESS**: final, consists in knowledge I. i. 9; comes from moral virtue IV. xvii. 72; Aristotle's definition 76; two kinds, contemplative and active 85 ff.; II. v. 67 ff.; inconsistent with desire III. xv. 30. *v.* Life.
- HEAVENS**: number and arrangement II. iii; movement of h. conditions form of things IV. ii. 20. *v.* Toynbee's *Dict. s.v. Cielo*.

HOOR: reckoned in two ways III. vi. 13; temporal 14 ff.; equal 24 ff.; canonical, how reckoned IV. xxiii. 129 ff.

IMAGINATION: falls below intellect III. iv. 88; sometimes fickle IV. xv. 152.

IMMORTALITY: denial is most bestial II. ix. 56; maintained by all philosophers and writers 60 ff.

INJUSTICE: includes treachery, ingratitude, &c. I. xii. 78 ff.

INTELLECT: divine i. cause of human II. v. 102; vision dulled by the body 119 ff.; sometimes healthy, sometimes infirm IV. xv. 107; also called mind (*mente*) 110; its health consists in knowing what things are 114; infirmities of 127 ff.; sometimes due to bodily defect 170; 'Potential Intellect' xxi. 44.

INTELLIGENCES: substances separate from matter II. ii. 6; know God as cause III. vi. 43; lower things as effects 45; know man's exemplar in divine mind 63; infernal I. excluded from philosophy xiii. 12; receive divine light immediately xiv. 35.

JUSTICE: most human virtue I. xii. 71; only in intellect or will 74; cardinal virtue of practical life IV. xxii. 111. v. Old Age.

KNOWLEDGE: naturally desired I. i. 3; hindered by causes external and internal 16 ff.; desire of k. different in kind from that of riches IV. xiii. v. God.

LATIN: why unfit for commentary I. v. ff.; not liable to change 48; regulated by art 103; studied from avarice ix. 20; abandoned by many noble 34.

LAUGHTER: should be moderate III. viii. 108.

LAW: for the sake of equity IV. ix. 81; defined 87; Civil and Canon xii. 100; should ride appetite xxvi. 42.

LIFE: human l. is life of reason II. viii. 21; contemplative and active IV. xvii. 88; contemplative best 108; Mary and Martha, an allegory of the two lives *ib.*; course like an arch IV. xxiii. 45 ff.; apex of life between thirty and forty years 91; divided into four ages, Adolescence, Youth, Old Age, Decline *ib.* 117 ff. and xxiv; like a tangled forest *ib.* 125; has various paths *ib.* xii. 188.

LOVE: causes which generate and increase l. I. xii. 22; why called Son of Venus II. vi. 117; is spiritual union of the Lover with object of l. III. ii. 19; IV. i. 1; everything has special l. III. iii. 8; man's special l. 34; man has also same l. as other things 39; Divine l. wholly eternal xiv. 52.

**LIGHT**: applied to Christ II. ix. 116; to Intelligences III. xiv. 36; to Philosophy IV. i. 95, &c.; reveals virtues and vices II. xi. 72; of sun received differently by bodies III. vii. 30 ff.; how arrested in mirrors ix. 75; coloured by medium 98; Divine light has different names xiv. 40 ff.

**MAGNANIMITY** (or Highmindedness): virtue IV. xvii. 44; is used as spur by reason xxvi. 54; synonymous with courage 57.

**MAN**: naturally desires knowledge I. i. 3; by nature imperfect iv. 68; created to replace fallen angels II. vi. 98; reason his true nobility viii. 18; most perfect of animals ix. 80; has proper love for perfect things III. iii. 34; has all other natural loves 36 ff.; may descend to brute or rise to angel vii. 69; wondrous in complexity viii. 2 ff.; composed of soul and body IV. xxi. 10; social animal iv. 9; xxvii. 29; image of God and desires to return to Him xii. 140; all come from one ancestor xv. 27; believed by heathen to be of one species 50 ff.

**METAPHYSIC**: treats of primary substances II. xv. 81; called Philosophy in a special sense III. xi. 178.

**MIND**: (*mente*) seat of reason III. ii. 79 ff.; predicated only of man, and divine substances 140; includes intellect IV. xv. 110; divine m. the seat of Philosophy IV. xxx. *fin.*; (*animo*) more noble than body xxii. 75; predicated of those desires only which are rational 95.

**NATURE**: excellences of Nature come from God III. ii. 60; puts limit to man's powers iv. 106; makes nothing in vain xv. 81; is limited by God IV. ix. 19; orders particular natures xxvi. 19. *v.* Angel, Man.

**NOBILITY**: wrongly supposed to come by Nature IV. i. 47; Emperor's definition iii. 45; this partly true partly false x. 6 ff.; not engendered by time xiv. 24 ff.; is perfection of proper nature xvi. 42; derivation 60 ff.; defined by fruits, viz. moral and intellectual virtues 112; wider than virtue, and therefore its cause xix. 18; applies also to feelings 79; goodness generally xx. 18; belongs to individual, not family 41; is seed of goodness sent by God to the soul happily placed 87; friend of Philosophy xxx. 60. *v.* Riches, Soul, Virtue.

**NUMBER**: belongs to all subjects of science II. xiv. 130; importance of two, twenty, one thousand xv. 25.

**OLD AGE**: from forty-five to seventy IV. xxiv. 40; should be Prudent, Just, Bountiful, and Fair-spoken xxvii. 11.

- PHILOSOPHER**: before Pythagoras called wise III. xi. 33; must love and be loved by wisdom 81, 123, &c.; opinions of various schools as to end of human life IV. vi. 83; Aristotle greatest 136; master of philosophers viii. 141; Stoics, Peripatetics, and Epicureans agree in heavenly Athens III. xiv. 138; these signified by three women at Sepulchre IV. xxii. 161.
- PHILOSOPHY**: is the 'Lady' of the Canzone II. xiii. 70; xvi. 20, 101, &c.; daughter of God, queen of all things xiii. 71; moral philosophy condition of the other sciences *ib.* xv. 125; definition III. xi. *passim*; is literally friendship for wisdom *ib.* 59 ff.; subject-matter understanding, form love 135; xiii. 139; xv. 120; loving converse with Wisdom xii. 95; when pursued for pleasure or profit not genuine xi. 95 ff.; mirror of Divine Majesty xv. 54.
- PRUDENCE** (or Good Sense): deemed intellectual by Aristotle IV. xvii. 78; xxvii. 80; cardinal virtue of practical life xxii. 110. *v.* Old Age.
- REASON**: highest nobility of man's form II. viii. 18; his true life 25; his highest perfection ix. 92; III. ii. 116; IV. vii. 119; has fourfold relation to human activity, reflects upon it but does not produce 43; reflects upon and produces (a) in a man's self, (b) in material outside himself, (c) in the exertion of will itself, i.e. moral action ix. 40 ff.
- REVERENCE**: privation of r. different from negation IV. viii. 104; not to be rendered where not due 131; then becomes irreverence 138.
- RICHES**: why condemned by Preacher II. xi. 84; part of Emperor's definition of nobility IV. iii. 45; imperfect in three ways xi. 32; not imperfect in subject-matter 42; more easily acquired by wicked 95; should be used to make friends 114; desire of them insatiable xii. 65 ff.; cause positive evil and privation of good xiii. 92; good for giving away 140.
- SCIENCE**: figured by the heaven II. xiv. 6; three main points of resemblance *ib.* ff.; enumeration of sciences 55 ff.; moral philosophy conditions men for s. xv. 126; all sciences called Philosophy III. xi. 180; how defined by Aristotle IV. xii. 127. *v.* Metaphysic.
- SENSE** (faculty of): based on vegetative, basis of intellectual faculty III. ii. 97 ff.; some things apprehended by more senses than one ix. 55 ff. *v.* Soul.
- SENSE** (of writings): literal, allegorical, moral, analogical II. i.

17 ff.; literal, the foundation 89; allegorical, the true sense of Canzoni xiii. 3.

SHAME: a passion III. viii. 87; proper in Adolescence IV. xxv. 23; includes three feelings 33. *v.* Feeling.

SOUL: immortal II. ix. 45 ff.; partakes most of divine nature III. ii. 47, 117; desires union with God 57; and with all natural excellences as divine 59 ff.; has three faculties, vegetative, sensitive, rational 85 ff.; actuality, cause, and form of body vi. 112 ff.; displayed chiefly in eyes and mouth viii. 65; how generated IV. xxi. 32; excellence largely depends on generation 59 ff.; but may be engrafted xxii. 121; works with bodily organs xxv. 128; desires return to God as traveller to inn xii. 140; or as sailor to port xxviii. 16; met by citizens of heaven 37.

SUAIVITY: 'suave' means 'suasive' ii. viii. 36. *v.* Adolescence.

TEMPERANCE: virtue IV. xvii. 34; cardinal virtue of practical life xxii. 110; used as bridle by reason xxvi. 52. *v.* Youth.

TIME: things love t. of birth III. iii. 47; most important, especially in speech IV. ii. 45; Aristotle's definition 48; quarrels due to mistake of t. 88; souls disordered by wrong t. xx. 72.

TRANSLATION: poetry loses sweetness by t. I. vii. 90; t. of *Ethics* clumsy x. 70; Old and New T. of Aristotle II. xv. 63.

TRINITY: three Persons, one Substance II. vi. 60; contemplated by Hierarchies and Orders of Angels 56; Power in Father, Wisdom in Son, Love in Holy Spirit 61 ff.; Gifts of Holy Spirit IV. xxi. 105. *v.* God.

UTILITY: excellence of gifts I. viii. 12 ff.; of rectitude highest viii. 56; of vernacular ix. 64; not source of genuine friendship or philosophy III. xi. 90 ff.

VERNACULAR: why chosen for Commentary I. v. 25 ff.; unstable 49; ruled by custom 104; has wholehearted liberality viii. 9 ff.; superior to Provençal x. 77; detractors condemned xi. *passim*; why loved by Dante xii; gave him existence xiii. 30; guided him to knowledge 38; strengthened by poetic use 51; not worthy to speak literally of philosophy II. xiii. 60.

VIRTUE: general definition I. v. 71; intellectual and moral are habits xi. 48; all are fruits of Nobility IV. xvi. 115; God noblest v., intellectual only III. vii. 64; moral vv. as reckoned by Aristotle IV. xvii. 30; defined 71; make men blest and happy 72; come from right habit of choice xviii. 3; in fruits



- surpass angelic virtues xix. 54; come from nobility as perse from black xx. 12; mixed with feeling 17; theological v III. xiv. 136; cardinal v. IV. xxii. 110. v. Beauty, Happiness
- VISION: how effected by the eye II. x. 35; spirit of II. x. 39 III. ix. 83; its mechanism ix. 67 ff.
- WILL: morality depends on freewill I. ii. 38; belongs to the rational or intellectual part xii. 73; IV. xxii. 95; freewill necessary to virtue I. viii. 100; IV. xviii. 4; orders all actions which can be called our own ix. 36.
- YOUTH: gives help and perfection IV. xxiv. 6; includes the culmination of life 22; xxvi. 24; its appetites to be governed by reason 46; needs Temperance, and Courage or Magnanimity, 53 ff.; also Love, Courtesy, and Loyalty 81 ff.

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